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T I M O S H E N K O

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TIMOSHENKO

MARSHAL OF THE RED ARMY

A Study

by Walter Mehring

ALBERT UNGER : NEW YORK

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BY ERNST WILLARD, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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Dedicated to
the victims of Nazism
all over the world.

▪

F O R E W O R D

This book is not a biography.

A final judgment cannot be reached about Timoshenko because, unlike the work of an artist or scientist who can be judged by a single accomplishment, the work of a general depends on the final result.

This book is an attempt to study the Russian soldier from a socio-psychological viewpoint.

It is not so much the history of an individual as of a type. Timoshenko is for us a characteristic product of Bolshevik militarism, a man who has lived through the entire development of the Soviet regime, from the initial overthrow of Tsarism to the present life and death struggle against the German invader.

In ~~times~~ of crisis the masses require some name bearing in itself a suggestive power. Usually such a name is put forward by belligerent governments or by revolutionary committees. Timoshenko's popularity rose quite unexpectedly. However, it seems at present that his popularity is even greater abroad than in Russia. Even today, after severe reverses, Timoshenko continues to hold the attention of the world. In both the American and British press and in mass meetings in London it has recently been suggested that he be given the supreme command of all the United Nations' forces.

In part, this recognition is due to the growing realization that the Soviet struggle against Germany has brought enormous military advantages to the democracies.

The democracies and Russia have in common an irreconcilable hostility against the German and Japanese military cliques who separately aim to subjugate the world. The Italian fascist clique, with its obsolete colonial ambitions and

anachronistic ideas of an *imperium romanum* does hardly count. Contrary to the Nazis' and Japanese's common plan of world conquest, the democracies and the Bolshevists, have only one aim: a non-imperialistic independency.

Hence the reasoning about the second front and the post-war aims, the discussions of the future economy of the world, and the method of dealing with Germany after National Socialism has collapsed. Indeed, too long one remained in complacent expectance, misled by an illusion that the National Socialism could revert into normal conditions after its excesses in the beginning.

However, the National Socialist movement did not represent a revolution, but a ruthlessly developed dictatorial system merely pursuing the old and well known speculations of the Hohenzollern and the Prussian Junkers. The terrible loss of time already suffered by the adversaries and victims, should convince them not to stick to political debates, but to concen-

trate their efforts on the prosecution of the war.

This war bears little similarity to the last world conflict. Totally new methods of fighting, not only technically, but in the first line morally and psychologically appear regularly on all the theatres of war. The Russian officers have utilized one new factor—the guerillas—to the widest possible extent. Yet, the sabotage formations in Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, and Eastern Europe—groups in many ways comparable to the Russian guerillas—have so far been left to their own resources; they lack the organizational guidance of a general staff. The desire to strengthen the morale of these fighters for freedom was perhaps the inspiration for the proposed nomination of a guerilla expert like Timoshenko to the supreme command of *all* the anti-Axis forces.

The outcome of the war against Pan-Germanism will depend to no small extent on the continued existence of the Red Army and the activity of the European sabotage formations.

Foreword

Timoshenko might be the ideal leader to command such forces.

In 1933 Timoshenko traveled abroad. He visited Berlin and observed the robot-like discipline of the German Army. When, as Marshal, he reorganized the Russian Army, he introduced many of the German disciplinary conceptions feeling that war would be inevitable. But it would be incorrect to regard him as an imitator of German methods of organization. The much feared and often praised German organization also has all the disadvantages that are common to a group of soldier slaves and slave drivers. The so-called "New Order" consisting solely of mass executions and deportations will forever remain a single chaos.

National Socialism is the unleashing of the most evil instincts. Hence, no nation can conclude a lasting peace with Nazism. If the Soviet Union made such a peace it would become a National Socialist colony.

The nature of the enemy clearly indicates

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what is to be the post-war aim of the United Nations: the liberation of Europe from National Socialism and Pan-Germanism. The future economic organization of Europe can scarcely be determined in advance. It will depend on various factors, such as the degree of destruction of all kinds of ethical and material values. The ethical postulates for the new European community can be found in the American Declaration of Independence.

From the concept of "inalienable right" and the fact that "all human beings are created equal" it should be possible to derive adequate ideas for the united struggle of the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union. Timoshenko seems to be one of the most dynamic forces working towards this aim.

WALTER MEHRING.

New York City, September 8, 1942

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The art of war is governed by five constant factors.

There are: (I) The Moral Law, (II) Heaven, (III) Earth, (IV) The Commander, (V) Method and Discipline.

The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.

Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

Earth comprises distances, great and small, danger and security; open ground and narrow passages; the chances of life and death.

The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.

By Method and Discipline are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the gradation of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

These five heads should be familiar to every general; he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not, will fail.

Therefore in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:

- (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the moral law?
- (2) Which of the two generals has most ability?
- (3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?

▪

Introduction

- (4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?
- (5) Which army is the stronger?
- (6) On which side are officers and men most highly trained?
- (7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in rewards and punishment?

By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory and defeat.

SUN TZU
The Art Of War
500 B.C.

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Chapter I

THE RISE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

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"Teach your troops only what is necessary for war and under conditions closely resembling the actual conditions of war." —*Timoshenko.*

EARLY IN 1917, Corporal Semyon Constantino-
vich Timoshenko was arrested "for mutiny and
grave insubordination at a moment when our
troops were engaged by the enemy." He was to
appear before the court martial of the Fourth
Cavalry Division on the Riga front. He had
struck an officer; most generally the penalty for
this crime was death. But these were days when
Russia was being shaken by great upheavals.
Such incidents had become quite common. The
fall of the Tsar, the accession to power of the
Provisional Government, and the growing con-
fidence of the oppressed masses were destroying
the old conceptions of discipline. The pow-

erful Workers' and Soldiers' Councils intervened on behalf of Timoshenko. Instead of bringing him to trial, the Fourth Cavalry Division expelled its commissioned officers.

Twenty-three years later, the same soldier, now a Marshal of the Soviet Union, issued the following order:

"A commander is not responsible for whatever consequences follow the necessary use of force to quell insubordination or to restore discipline. A commander who, in a case of this kind, has not shown firmness, who has failed to use force to insure the execution of an order, must face court martial . . ."

The text of this order embodies the disciplinary concepts of the modern Red Army. The author of the text, Timoshenko, had begun his career by a grave violation of discipline. The middle class revolution saved him from the consequences of this act. Later, the triumph of the Bolsheviks made him a guerilla leader and paved the way for his rise. His personal his-

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tory is intimately connected with the development which, beginning with the "Red Partisans", led through the "Red Army of Workers and Peasants" founded by a decree of Lenin, to the reformed Soviet Army.

Timoshenko hails from the southernmost part of Bessarabia, a region criss-crossed by the many inlets of the Danube and inhabited for centuries by a population predominantly Russian, in whose veins flows some few drops of Turkish or Armenian blood. He was born in the village of Furmanka, in Ismail County, February 18th, 1895. His father Constantin, a *biedniak*, or landless peasant, the Russian equivalent of the American "sharecropper", slaved with his sons on the land of a noble who lived abroad. In the miserable village school Semyon learned to read, to write, and to recite the many pompous appellations of the all-powerful "Little Father", Tsar of all Russias, vested with civilian, military, and spiritual power. In 1914 the Tsar

declared war on Imperial Germany, and in 1915, Timoshenko, then twenty years old, was found fit for service at the front. A huskily built fellow, with a rakish little mustache, and an open, naively audacious expression, Semyon was like many another peasant in the uniform of the Tsar. He was appointed machine gunner to the First Oranienbaum Regiment, trained in the use of the American type machine gun, and sent to the Fourth Cavalry Division on the Western Front.

The Tsarist Army numbered 6,250,000 men. Over a third of these were without firearms of any kind. The artillerists were under strict orders not to use more than three shells a day per gun. The Russian "steamrollers" rolled backwards, and the Russian Cossacks, instead of arriving at the gates of Berlin, as the Allied press had promised, retreated behind Warsaw. But the boasts of the Germans were to be contradicted, too. In 1915 Ludendorff announced that the "Russian army had been completely anni-

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hilated", and that by 1916 it would be possible to attack France without threat from the rear. But the Russian armies went on fighting.

The Russian peasants, who formed the bulk of the Tsarist armies, fought with brutal stubbornness. Their losses were fantastic. The bold Cossack invasion of East Prussia in the fall of 1914 diverted forces from the German army on the western front and thus frustrated the blitzkrieg against Paris. The battle of the Rokitno marshes, named, by the order of Wilhelm II "the Battle of Tannenberg", (in revenge for the defeat suffered there by the Teutonic Order many hundred years ago) resulted in the complete destruction of the unfortunate army corps commanded by the Russian general Rennenkampf, but also immobilized German reserves which might have proved decisive in the Battle of the Marne.

Audacious tactical conceptions, however, cannot make up for weaknesses produced by a disorganized leadership. Nor can the most brilliant

leadership succeed when the political order on which it rests is rotten. Strategy is only an expression of the political order. Now, in the Tsarist state corruption was spreading everywhere, from the guards of war prisoners in Siberia to Sukhomlinov, the Minister of War. Russian war industries were disorganized by embezzlement and fraud, the upper classes expressed their demoralization by a senseless and unprecedented wastefulness, and the life of the court, stifled by Byzantine formalism, became increasingly superstitious. And the foundations of government were being undermined by nihilistic intellectuals and professional revolutionaries, who, under the influence of Kropotkin, Nietzsche, Marx, and the 1905 revolution, were preparing the overthrow of Tsarism.

At the head of the state were an incompetent Tsar and an ambitious German-born Tsarina, both of whom fear had made cruel, both of whom were in the "hands of dark forces". They were strongly influenced by the miracle-work-



MARSHAL SEMYON CONSTANTINOVICH TIMOSHENKO

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ing monk Rasputin, who first warned them against war and then conspired for a separate peace. The murder of Rasputin—he was lured to a party by Tsarist officers, induced to eat a poisoned cake, riddled with bullets, and finally flung into the Neva, sounded the death knell of the Russian monarchy. The last of the Tsars of all Russias was dismissed like an obscure official, and later, executed. His regime was followed by a provisional government under Prince Lvov, and then by another government under the Social Revolutionary, Kerensky. This government pretentiously proclaimed the “revolution”.

The Allies and the Russian army praised Kerensky's moderate “revolution” as salutary. In his soldier's memorandum General Brussilov wrote: “The whole army was ready for a revolution. Even the officers were wavering, and were dissatisfied with the situation . . .”

Timoshenko

Kerensky, a worshipper of Napoleon, promised the Russian people social conquests comparable to those of the French Revolution. To the Allies he promised continuation of the war. France dispatched Thomas, Socialist Minister of Munitions, to encourage the Russian soldiers with revolutionary speeches. England intensified the anti-submarine campaign. But on the streets of Petrograd, crowds were demonstrating, demanding "peace and bread," and in the very building which served as the seat of the provisional government, sat the newly-created Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, which, by its "Order Number 1," abolished the military salute and released the troops from the obligation of obeying their superior officers, thus inciting them to mutiny.

In the meantime, a truly radical social theorist arrived on the scene. Ulianov-Lenin came from Switzerland, Leon Trotsky from England. Soon Stalin appeared, released from a Siberian prison camp. These men had played

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an important part in the 1905 revolution. Kerensky's summer offensive, unsupported by the Allies, and sabotaged from within, failed. General Kornilov attempted a counter-revolutionary military putsch, which was crushed before his troops reached Petrograd. In the cities, the masses maintained their demand for "peace and bread," and at the front, the soldiers fired on their officers. On November 7th, 1917, the Bolsheviks led an armed insurrection, and overthrew the provisional government. Kerensky, dressed in woman's clothes, fled from the Winter Palace. The Fourth Cavalry Division was one of the first army groups to go over to the Soviets, and with it went Corporal Timoshenko, who only a few months before these events had struck an officer.

This was the Bessarabian peasant's first lesson in the relation of political and military forces. The lesson may be summed up in the following words of Lenin:

"The army's hesitancy, inevitable in the face

of any authentic popular movement, leads, as soon as the planned insurrection has begun, to the real struggle for the conquest of the army."

As their first offering to the Russian people, the Bolsheviks procured the long wished for peace, the costly peace of Brest-Litovsk, which deprived Russia of half its European territory. The defeated Russian army was breaking up into a mass of peasants. But for the most part, the soldiers, officers as well as privates, did not want to go back to their pre-war "way of life," or could not. Rootless, habituated to violence and adventure, they formed revolutionary or counter-revolutionary volunteer groups. A year later, a similar situation developed in defeated Germany. There, too, "Red Councils" of Workers and Soldiers were formed. But the German Revolution never went beyond the stage of a "provisional government". Reactionaries gained control of the popular movement, Prussian officers and Junkers rallied bands of marauders and

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organized para-military troops such as the "Free Corps", which conquered Berlin and Munich, and the "Baltic Groups", which terrorized the Baltic states. These irregular formations, under the leadership of Ernst Roehm, were the nucleus of Hitler's Storm Troops.

The political life of Russia was now dominated by the civil war. Foreign powers, both Imperial Germany and the Allies, provided the monarchist generals with military equipment, and supported their struggle against the Bolsheviks. Czech and Rumanian units of the Tsarist army now fought for the counter-revolution on Russian soil. The Germans violated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and marched into the Ukraine, with the Baku oilfields as their ultimate objective.

Even before the new Soviet government could organize a defense system, throngs of men, with rather primitive equipment, dressed in rags and remnants of all sorts of uniforms, rushed to its aid, especially in the south. These were the

Timoshenko

guerillas. K. Yeremiev, who at that time commanded the First Red Army Corps in the Petrograd District, described them in these words: "The partisan detachments were joined by enthusiasts, men eager to fight, but disinclined to wait for instructions in accordance with a prepared plan; men who wanted to act at once. It is indeed the case that at the front they were often troublesome. They often ignored plans and dispositions, disobeyed orders, and followed their own inspirations. In the end, the commander at the front urged that these detachments be removed . . . "

Later, these same guerilla bands were a source of differences between the Bolshevik party leadership and the army command. But although underestimated by military theoreticians, the guerillas later proved their worth in the first winter campaign against Hitler. In following the career of Timoshenko we shall have much occasion to refer to the guerillas.

For Semyon Timoshenko, who imposed the

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strictest discipline on the Russian army since the time of the Ruriks, gained his first laurels as a guerilla leader.

Lenin himself ordered the pro-Bolshevik Fourth Cavalry Division to be transferred from the Riga front to Rostov, and assigned to it the task of crushing the revolt of the Don Cossacks.

On the northern approaches to the Caucasus and the steppes along the river Don, General Kaledin, close friend to Alexeev, the last Tsarist commander-in-chief, organized a front against the Soviet government. His troops comprised feudal Hussars, soldiers returned from the Turkish front, Rumanians, and Don Cossacks.

The history of these Cossacks indicates that they were the original guerilla warriors of Russia; it is a history of armed insurrections. Many attempts were made by the Tsars to incorporate these horsemen into the regular army. They enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy until the middle of the eighteenth century, with their

own courts, administration, and freely elected officials. But after one of their revolts, Peter the Great deprived them of the right to choose their "Ataman," or leader; Catherine the Great made them land-grants in order to settle them, and many of them became farmers in the Don and Kuban regions. But they preserved their folk dances, their songs, their arrogance and cruelty. Having been glorified in Russian classical literature, they became hated by the masses because of their participation in the pogroms organized by the Tsar. The Russian government encouraged pogroms in order to divert the people's attention from its mismanagement whenever needed.

It was in the guerilla war against Kaledin's Cossacks that Timoshenko learned the tactical use of small detachments. Though numerically superior, Kaledin's troops were so demoralized by the debauchery of their officers, the hatred of even the anti-Bolshevik peasants, and by the political dissensions arising from their confused

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aims, that they were quickly beaten. In despair, Kaledin shot himself . . .

Timoshenko was demobilized in March of 1918, but instead of returning to the farmlands of Bessarabia, he joined the guerillas in the Crimea. The first Black Sea guerilla detachment was composed of men like himself, adventurous pro-Bolshevik partisans. Timoshenko was soon elected platoon commander, and then, squadron commander. The rocky terrain of the Crimea was particularly favorable for guerilla operations, and Timoshenko, alert to opportunity, was able to distinguish himself by organizing nightly raids against the Whites, and also against the regular German army.

The Germans were conquering the whole of the Ukraine. In the Far East, Japan seized Vladivostok without being opposed. The vital Trans-Siberian railroad was taken over by the Czechs. Soviet Russia was reduced to the Moscow and Petrograd sectors, with a few remaining bases in the south. Kharkov, the most important in-

dustrial center, capitulated to the Germans, and its fall threatened central and the rest of southern Russia.

Germany concluded a separate peace with the Ukraine. Skoropadsky, the Cossack leader, was declared dictator, and he was received at the court of Wilhelm II. After his government was overthrown Skoropadsky fled to Munich. He became chief of the White Guards. In 1919 he met Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic Russian. It was Skoropadsky who procured the first subsidies for Adolf Hitler and bought him the *Voelkische Beobachter*.

Denikin's army was on the lower Volga. If it succeeded in joining the right wing of the German army in the north, the Soviet troops would be imperiled. But Tsaritsin's small garrison of workers stood firm. And to Tsaritsin, through the White Guard lines, came Timoshenko, whose detachments had been all but wiped out in the Crimea.

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Tsaritsin, on a bend of the Volga stretching from Bolshevik controlled territory to regions held by the Whites, dominated strategically the most imperiled part of Soviet Russia's supply line. For almost all of the food shipments for the starved central and northern regions had to come up the Volga from the south.

Klementy Efremovich Voroshilov, a former metal worker from the Donbass coalfields, an active revolutionary since 1903, was in command of the Red forces defending Tsaritsin, which had been invested from three sides. Voroshilov had been exiled to Archangel by the Tsarist government; he had escaped, crossed all of Russia, and met Joseph Stalin in Baku; during the war he had worked in the munitions industry and proved one of the most valuable liaison men in the underground movement. When the Bolsheviks seized power, the workers' soviet at Lugansk made him delegate to Petrograd, where he served as chief of the workers' police; later, at Lenin's request, he returned to Lugansk.

In Lugansk (today Voroshilovgrad) he took over the command of the Soviet forces, and he made an energetic attempt to break through to Kharkov. That city's capitulation to the Germans forced him to retreat; the Lugansk railway junction was still intact. With 15,000 soldiers, and 30,000 men, women and children, Voroshilov organized a daring flight to Tsaritsin, a journey which takes about one day by train. But Voroshilov and his forces had to cross steppes scorched by burning sun, they were involved in constant skirmishes with Cossacks and German troops; the trip actually took three months. The mighty railroad bridge across the Don lay in ruins. A month's time was spent in repairing it. When Voroshilov and his exhausted partisans finally reached Tsaritsin, the Cossacks had just about encircled the city.

The leader of the Cossacks was Ataman Piotr Pavlovich Krasnov, Kaledin's successor, a rabid anti-Bolshevik, who had attempted a putsch in Petrograd, been captured, and released on

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parole. He was a particular favorite of the German government, which at the very moment that its ambassador to Moscow, Baron von Mirbach, was assuring the Soviet of German goodwill, was sending the Cossacks an abundance of supplies.

Timoshenko reached Tsaritsin with what remained of his regiment. At the war council in the besieged city he met three men, in intimate contact with whom he was to experience so many military and political successes and catastrophies: Voroshilov, military commander of the city, Budenny, mustachioed ex-sergeant of the Tsarist cavalry, and Joseph Stalin, the political commissar sent by Lenin.

The situation of Tsaritsin seemed desperate. Voroshilov was one of those guerillas "who were often troublesome . . . and followed their own inspiration," and Trotsky insisted several times that he relinquish the command. He sent several telegrams to Tsaritsin ordering Voroshilov's dismissal. But Stalin returned one of these tele-

grams with the notation: "Unheeded." 'This telegram, a unique document in the history of an *extraordinary* enmity, today rests in the museum of the Russian civil war.

On November 15th, 1918, the White Guards demanded Tsaritsin's unconditional surrender. Commissar Joseph Stalin, Klementy Voroshilov, and cavalry commander Semyon Budenny, discussed the situation. Budenny suggested a cavalry sortie.

"But who can lead the attack?" Stalin wanted to know. Budenny suggested: Timoshenko. "Is he not much too young?" asked Voroshilov, who was then thirty-seven years old. His objection was overruled—but Timoshenko did not forget the incident. Twenty-one years later, Stalin asked Timoshenko whether Voroshilov was the right man to direct the Russian campaign against Finland.

"Is he not much too old?" Timoshenko is reported to have said in reply.

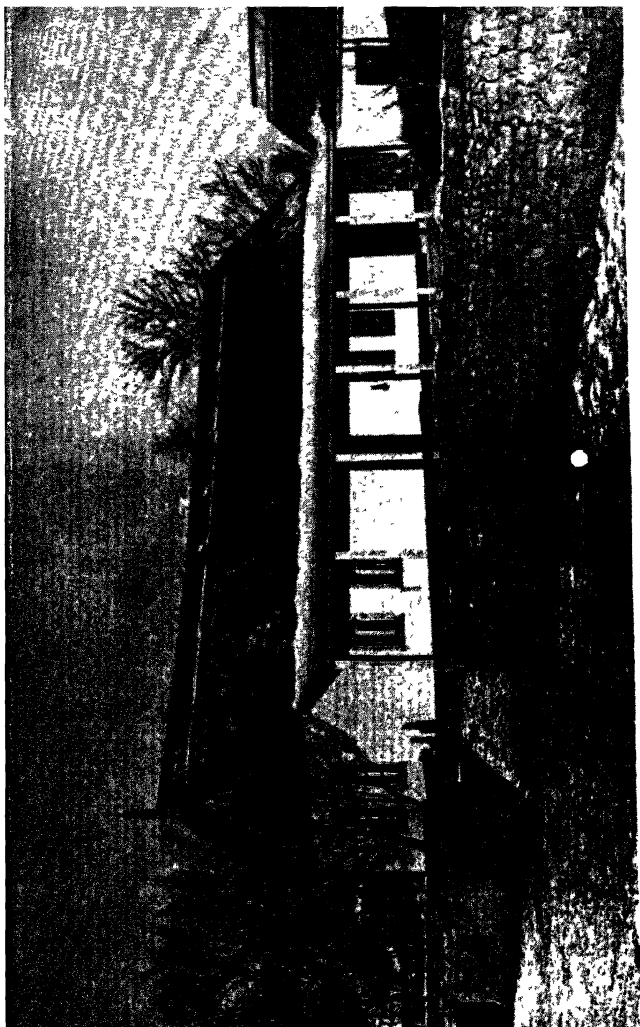
But Timoshenko did indeed lead the sortie

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from Tsaritsin, and succeeded in breaking through the forces which had encircled the city. *Not without justice* have recent Soviet historians dubbed Tsaritsin "the Red Verdun."

The strategic significance of the city's resistance and of Timoshenko's cavalry sortie must not be overestimated. It had, however, interesting political repercussions. The fact that Tsaritsin was rebaptized Stalingrad relates to the struggle for power which was waged in Russia after the civil war over Lenin's succession. The defense of Tsaritsin has been glorified in books, posters, and moving pictures ("Stalin in Tsaritsin"), as the turning point of the Russian civil war.

Tsaritsin had remained for some time a fortified Soviet base wedged between Krasnov's Cossacks and the German army. It was the meeting place of four men who in the course of twenty years rose to the top of the Soviet hierarchy, and one of these men, Timoshenko, today leads the Red Army in its historic conflict with the National Socialist *Wehrmacht* . . .



Timoshenko's Native Village of Fymanka. The house in which Timoshenko was born.

Chapter II

WITH BUDENNY'S HORSE GUARDS

■

"I only know three things in war: Coup
d'oeil, Speed and Dash."

—General Suvorow

AFTER THE collapse of the German army and the Allied peace of Versailles, the war against the Soviet Union entered a new phase. The oil of the Caucasus, the grain of the Ukraine, and the coal mines of the Don Basin, none of which were controlled by the Bolsheviki, tempted the victorious powers, which had gained through the war only the German colonial possessions. However, the powers regarded communism as more dangerous to them than German imperialism, which was limited, at least, to the pursuit of traditional objectives. White Guards and Tsarists in Paris, Munich, Berlin, Prague, systematically fanned the fear of communism. The

Tsarists were supported by the German anti-Bolshevist League. Under the pretext of fighting Bolshevism, Germany began to prepare its revenge and to pile up armaments.

In 1919, a number of anti-Soviet formations invaded Russia from all sides. All the great European powers contributed financial and military aid. But the various anti-Soviet groups pursued different and sometimes contradictory objectives.

The pre-Fascist, anti-Semitic "Free Ukrainian Republic" of Skoropadsky and Petlura collapsed with the defeat of its German masters. In the south, Alexeev, ex-generalissimo, continued his agitation for the "Pan-Russian Leagues". With the support, of France, Admiral Kolchak set up a personal dictatorship in Siberia, calling it the "Supreme Leadership of the Russian State." In the Ukraine, Makhno's anarchist followers were concentrating on such political objectives as murder and rape. In Samara, the Social Revolutionaries tried to organize a popu-

lar movement against the Bolsheviks. Denikin, Alexeev's successor, supported the interests of the Allies as against those of the Germans, while his sub-leader, Krasnov, who had been supported by the Germans, blackmailed the Allies.

Ataman Kaledin's dramatic suicide is a striking symbol of the impotent and aimless aspect of the counter-revolution. In the presence of his officers, he drew his revolver, shouted, "Russia has been lost by too much talk!", and blew out his brains.

Later, all Europe was conquered by Pan-Germanism, because the Allies instead of acting indulged in "too much talk."

Despite the confusion in the ranks of its enemies, the Soviet Union in 1919 seemed too weak to defend itself on four fronts against military forces with superior equipment. Yudenich moved against Petrograd; a strong northern army under the political control of Kolchak and led by the Czech general, Gayda, was pushing

through the Urals; a British expeditionary force commanded by Sir Edward Ironside landed in Archangel; in southern Russia, Denikin, supported by the French fleet, which had seized Odessa, approached the western Caucasus. In the middle of May, with a force of 150,000 men, composed mainly of peasants recruited by forced levies and lying propaganda, Denikin began an offensive which can be compared to Hitler's blitz campaigns. In Taganrog and in Ekaterinodar, people crowded nightly around gaily illuminated maps which indicated the course of Denikin's irresistible advance. By summer he had taken Kharkov and overrun the Ukraine. By September, all South Russia with its treasure of minerals and grain was in his hands. On October 13th he entered Orel; he was about 200 miles from Moscow, and the world press announced the imminent destruction of the Bolshevik regime.

The Soviet high command considered two alternative operations: one, a flank attack whose

With Budenny's Horse Guards

first objective was the reconquest of Tsaritsin and the steppes of the Don, and whose final objective was Novorossisk on the Black Sea, Denikin's main supply port; the other, a direct cavalry assault against Kharkov aiming ultimately at Rostov. The latter plan, the so-called Stalin plan, was adopted because it had two advantages over the former, which was supported by Trotsky. Stalin's plan seemed more plausible because there were railroads in central Russia, while no railroads existed in the Tsaritsin steppes, and also because the Red armies, by advancing through industrial regions, could rely on the support of pro-Soviet proletarians, while the south was inhabited by hostile Cossacks and peasants.

It was during this period that the Red Cavalry, "sword of the Russian army," as Soviet writers describe it, was constituted. On October 23rd came the sensational news of Yudenich's defeat before Petrograd.

As we saw before, the defense of Tsaritsin had

Timoshenko

brought together Voroshilov, Budenny, and Timoshenko. These three men were animated by the same type of fanaticism, and they were similar in sensibility. Now in Tsaritsin, Timoshenko had been given command of the Second Cavalry Brigade; in 1919, this brigade was incorporated into Budenny's army corps, and Timoshenko, by one of those rapid promotions which occur in times of upheaval, was appointed commander of the Sixth Cavalry Division.

There were certain peculiar features to the mode of fighting of Timoshenko's cavalry. Military academicians, like the officers on Denikin's general staff, would not have approved of the tactics which brought about their defeat. Despite the bitter cold, Timoshenko's horsemen threw off their fur coats during battle, and attacked when orthodox strategy prescribed retreat. In accordance with Timoshenko's orders, they forced whatever enemy gun crews they captured to shell their own ranks. As a result of this order of Timoshenko, the thirty-seven cannon

wrested from the Whites were chiefly responsible for the destruction of the forces of General Mamontov, and thus made possible the Soviet occupation of Rostov.

When the Sixth Division entered Rostov, the White cavalry officers were on the alert for new forms of entertainment in the crowded cafes and restaurants of the port. Timoshenko surrounded the largest hotel and captured two hundred and fifty top ranking officers without having to strike a blow. He had scarcely established his staff in the hotel, when White orderlies arrived with the terrifying report that the railway station had been captured by the Reds. Timoshenko, as if speaking for the captured general staff, said ironically: "Everything is in order. Do not excite yourselves. No trains are to leave the city until after tomorrow."

The corruption of the frivolous Tsarist troops, who *celebrated imaginary victories* at the moment of actual defeat, is well described in the

memorandum sent by General Wrangel to Denikin. We quote from the General's "Memoirs":

"The further our armies advance the less effective is their disposition . . . The rear has become too vast . . . The war is becoming to too many people a means of getting rich; our supply service has degenerated into a medium for speculation and pillage. Each unit strives to secure as much as possible for itself. The army is completely demoralized, and is fast becoming a collection of tradesmen and profiteers. Nearly all of the officers have enormous sums of money in their possession; as a result, they devote themselves to gambling, drinking, and sexual excesses . . ." Many Tsarist generals travelled in special trains, with their own orchestras, singers and vaudevillians. Compare to this mode of life the situation in the rear of these armies. Again we quote Wrangel: "The population has to endure the horrors of arbitrary force: constant violence and pillage. I found the railroads blocked by trains and abandoned ambulances, without

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any staff, and filled with sick and wounded men who had eaten nothing for two or three days. When I reached Slaviansk, a wounded officer had just hanged himself so as to escape the torture of starvation. Crowds of refugees are literally dying of cold and hunger."

After six weeks of bitter fighting for the hills above the Don, the Red Cavalry decisively defeated the Whites. On April 2nd, 1920, Denikin fled precipitately to the Black Sea coast. A British cruiser brought him to Constantinople.

Admiral de Robert, the British High Commissioner in Constantinople urged the White Russian authorities to accept the Soviet government's terms. With regard to His Majesty's Government's attitude towards Denikin, the Admiral stated: "The British government has in the past given him a large amount of assistance, and this is the only reason why he has been able to continue the struggle up to the present; therefore it feels justified in hoping that he will accept the proposals."

Denikin was finished, but intervention went on. Pilsudsky, the Polish dictator, encouraged by the western powers, and stimulated by the promises of White Guard elements, who offered him Bielo-Russia and the Ukraine, joined the general crusade against communism. First of all, he established contact with General Wrangel, Denikin's successor. But Pilsudsky's persistent hatred for Russia made him distrustful of this new associate, with whose Pan-Russian program he was familiar. On April 25th, 1920, without consulting Wrangel whose preparations were still incomplete, Pilsudsky marched against the Soviet Union.

In a headlong advance he captured Kiev, thanks to the complicity of Ataman Petlura, the former teacher of dancing and swimming, who had been a member of Skoropadsky's government.

On July 4th, the Red General Staff decided that "the fate of the world revolution must be settled in the west," and instructed Tukhachev-

ski, former Tsarist lieutenant, to launch a counter-offensive. The First Cavalry Army, formed around Budenny's guerilla troops, whose victorious exploits had already undergone romantic *exaggeration*, was dispatched from the Caucasus to the Polish front. The popular horsemen of Budenny, whom the Russians now regarded as irresistible, traversed six hundred miles in forced marches, appeared on the southwestern sector of the front, and broke through the Polish lines at Skvira.

A strange lot were these horsemen of the Soviet. There were Don Cossacks and Kuban Cossacks, many of whom had previously fought under Denikin; there were Tartars and Kirkhizs; students from Moscow, and soldiers returned from the French front; there was Isaac Babel, the great Russian writer, whose stories have made the campaign immortal.

All the young men who followed Budenny and Timoshenko lived in a manner which makes one think of the *Lansquenets* of medieval times:

they camped in cathedrals, synagogues and on the estates of Polish nobles; some studied Lenin's speeches in the latest issue of *Izvestia*, some read the Talmud, others the Koran. They carried mandolins, *nagaikas* (Cossack horsewhips), the most old-fashioned pistols and the most modern type of machine gun.

Budenny, who, with his fantastically extended black mustache, red trousers, and silver stripes, looked more like a pirate than a military leader, appointed officers without the slightest regard for their past affiliations. He elevated former White Guard officers, acrobats, and Tartar chieftains, with this admonition: "You are a commander now; you will lead the attack. If you retreat, you will be shot."

The Red Army reached the gates of Warsaw. Poland appealed to the Allies for help. France sent General Maxime Weygand, England, Lord D'Abernon, who was known to have supported Ludendorff and the German Free Corps in the Kapp putsch.

The Reds suffered a reversal on the banks of the Vistula. Marshal Pilsudsky's propagandists told the Polish peasants that "*the Reds intended to russify them and confiscate their land.*" As a result, hundreds of thousands of peasants joined the Polish army. The Bolsheviks were to some extent responsible for the success of this propaganda: for instead of simply partitioning the big estates they nationalized all of the farms in the territory they controlled.

On August 12th, Pilsudsky launched his counter-offensive. By September, Wrangel had conquered the Ukraine, now devastated by so many previous "conquests." Budenny was dispatched with his cavalry force to meet Wrangel's threat and once more the Red troopers were victorious. Wrangel was driven back to the Crimea. On the mountainous terrain of the Perekop Isthmus, Wrangel made a last stand. Here Timoshenko's Division was badly mauled, and Timoshenko himself was gravely wounded.

But on the night of November 7th, 1920, the

Red Army pushed Wrangel's troops into the Black Sea.

Wrangel has himself described the end of his adventure marked by the flight from Novorossisk during a fearful blizzard. His troops had been decimated by hunger and typhus. Wrangel and his elite of Russian nobles made their getaway on a British warship.

On October 12th, Poland and the Soviet Union signed an armistice. In both camps there was much disagreement about the way in which the war had been fought. The French disputed the Polish claim that the victorious defense of Warsaw was a Polish achievement. Among the Reds there were arguments as to who was responsible for the final failure of the campaign. But these were minor matters. The great fact was this: intervention was over. Clausewitz, the renowned German military theorist, said of the European intervention against the French Revolution: "Only when politics was able correctly to estimate the forces set in motion in France, and



*Trmoshenko's Native Village of Furmanka.
The classroom in which Trmoshenko once studied. The teacher, S. Doga shows the children
the desk once occupied by their famous countryman.*

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the recent changes in the political structure of Europe, could it foresee the consequent changes in the grand strategy of warfare." It is clear that the European intervention against the Red Revolution had *not* been able correctly to estimate the new developments in Russia. The interventionist armies, for all their superiority in man power and equipment, were politically obsolete. The Revolution imparted to the Red Army a creative elan, one of whose manifestations was the initiative of the intrepid guerilla troops.

It may be interesting to note briefly some of the historical links between the intervention in 1920 and the invasion of 1941. These "historical" links happen to be a number of the White Guard leaders whom we have already mentioned.

In his book, "With Denikin's Armies," J. E. G. Hodgson, the American correspondent, reports that the Tsarist officers insisted that Rus-

sia's fall was caused by the combination of "international Jewry, the Freemasons, who wanted an alliance with Moscow, and Woodrow Wilson, who is a Jew." Alfred Rosenberg and Hitler have become the main disseminators of this view. In 1918, the White Guards around Skoropadsky had prepared the first version of the so-called "Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion," an alleged plan for Jewish world domination, the inspiration for which had come from agents of the Okhrana operating in Paris at the beginning of the century. Krasnov, the Cossack leader, after his defeat, worked as a military instructor at the White Guard Military Academy in Paris. He also wrote many anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic novels, one of which, entitled "The White Coat," describes the operations of a group of conspirators organized along the lines of the Ku Klux Klan for the purpose of overthrowing the Russian government.

Krasnov was one of the sponsors of Gorgulov, "Chief of the Green Nazis," who murdered the

French president, Doumer, in order, as he (Gorgulov) stated in court, to Summon France to "a crusade against the Soviet Union."

In a pamphlet entitled "World Events" (Imprimerie Rapide, Paris 1939), General Denikin, discussing the former Ukrainian leaders, asserted that Konovaletz (now dead) collaborated with the Gestapo, and that "nowadays Skoropadsky works for Rosenberg's department . . . trying to prove the advantages of a German colonial regime for 'Ukraine' . . ." It is well known that immediately after the Nazis took over power, Skoropadsky's Cassacks paraded before Hitler, and Skoropadsky himself went to work for the "Bureau of Foreign Affairs," set up by Rosenberg in the Kleiststrasse, Berlin. He helped to elaborate the plan for a blitzkrieg against Russia, which, originally conceived by General Hoffmann, is now being countered by Marshal Timoshenko.

▪

Chapter III

THE REVOLUTION GOES TO SCHOOL

▪

It is a moot question whether these are elements of proletarian or of bourgeois culture. I leave that question open. What is certain is that we have to learn—to read—write—and understand.

—*Lenin, Speech at the Fourth World Congress.*

AFTER THE civil war, Moscow was alive with the innumerable activities of an organization which spanned the globe. But the city was terribly impoverished: most of the shops were boarded up; apartment houses were a danger to the tenants, and many apartments stood empty in spite of the chronic housing shortage caused by the emigration to Moscow of masses from the provinces. The city also swarmed with delegates from European groups and from Mongolian tribes; as well as visitors of all sorts. The street pavings and plaster facades of houses were falling to pieces. Everyone, including the People's Commissars, wore ragged clothes—rags were the

uniform of the revolution. The new Red Square before the Kremlin became a market for cheap luxury goods, a parade ground, and a political club. On the wall of the Kremlin, near the entrance to the former "Grand Bazaar," hung a picture of the miraculous Iberian Mother of God.

But the masses had a new idol: Comrade Lenin. There were pictures of him haranguing the workers, receiving Caucasian delegations, conferring with Budenny and other military leaders, and these were displayed on all buildings and school walls and even printed on soap-wrappings. The Revolution was supplying new symbols for the old ones.

Young Timoshenko at the front had conceived Lenin's personality in terms of that leader's Olympian decrees and analytical speeches which were everywhere stormily discussed. Standing before the man who had recast the structure of the nation, a process in which the Bessarabian peasant became an army commander, Timo-

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shenko quite naturally trembled in every part of his being.

In "Red Star," organ of the Red Army, Timoshenko describes how he felt on first meeting Lenin:

"I arrived in Moscow in a state of great excitement, and I went to hear Vladimir Llyitch Lenin speak at the Bolshoi Theatre. Voroshilov asked me to dine with Lenin, and I was so surprised that I forgot to thank him; I could not imagine myself face to face with Lenin. We drove to the Kremlin in an open car and although I was lightly clad I was in a sweat from excitement. We dined in Kalinin's room—Lenin, Stalin, Frunze, Kalinin, Ordzhonikidze, Budenny and Voroshilov. Lenin said: 'We have a cavalryman here and people like that don't like to waste time: let's eat.' Lenin asked me about the fighting qualities of our soldiers. I informed him that they quickly adjusted themselves to the most complex situations. Lenin told me: 'You must always rely on

them. The chief thing is to be with your men'."

We can well imagine how filled with pride the young commander must have been when the first figure in the Soviet Union took the trouble to learn his views. However that may be, it was in keeping with Lenin's character to be attentive to the ideas and sentiments of someone who had risen from the ranks. The fact is that Lenin would patiently discuss the most naive objections to his doctrine, and for this reason succeeded in making it attractive and intelligible for the peasants and workers. But, we may ask, did Lenin expect to hear scientific formulations of military questions from the young cavalryman? Obviously, someone like Timoshenko, without theoretical training, could not be expected to make pronouncements on problems of strategy. But tactics is also a part of war. And an individual who had gone through the chaos of the internal struggle, and fought on a hundred different battlefields, under the most unique conditions, could indeed be expected to have interesting tactical ideas.

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But the science of war requires a foundation of traditional knowledge from all fields. Let us now consider another soldier whom Timoshenko met at this dinner with Lenin, a man whose name symbolizes the scientific, theoretical conceptions of the Red Army: Mikhail Vasilievich Frunze (born February 2nd, 1885, died October 31st, 1925).

Frunze came from a peasant family in Pishpek, the Kirghiz capital, which today bears his name. At the age of nineteen he entered the Polytechnical Institute in Petrograd. Like all young men of his time, he participated in politics. His idealism was astute: he joined the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party. He organized strikes and was exiled to Siberia. When the Revolution came, he was working on the organization of an underground militia. In 1918, he was made an army commander on the Eastern front. In 1924, he succeeded Trotsky as People's Commissar for the Army and Navy; he died quite suddenly in 1925 after an operation.

Frunze wrote many books on the problems of strategy with particular reference to the defense of the Soviet Union. The defense of the Soviet Union was the all-important practical military problem of the day, as Lenin noted at the Eighth Congress (attended by Timoshenko) : "We can by no means say that we are guaranteed against war. In any case, we must maintain our military preparedness. We cannot count our task finished with the blow already dealt imperialism, but we must exert our strength to the utmost to preserve our Red Army in complete military preparedness . . . "

For the fact is that the Soviet Union was bled white; it faced the problem of demobilizing over four million men, most of whom were starving, camping in unheated barracks, without the most indispensable articles of clothing. The problem was to organize demobilization, the transition to a peacetime economy, and adequate preparations for defense. Frunze's contribution towards achieving these objectives was considerable.

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The disordered structure of the Red Army (due in part to the fact that at the beginning of the civil war it had been constituted of territorial units instead of specialized combat groups) and the theoretical inexperience of its commanders had to be reckoned with by the Bolshevik leaders. Obviously there was urgent need for the rapid training of a scientifically-minded officers' corps. Men like Voroshilov, Budenny, and Timoshenko had been compelled under the impact of events to make important decisions on the spur of the moment. They relied to too great an extent on intuition. Their problem was to complement their experience with science. They had to learn the ABC of tactics and the grammar of strategy.

These young revolutionary "veterans" felt the insecurity of inferior knowledge when confronted by real theoreticians of war such as the ex-Tsarist military academician, Sapozhnikov, who once referred to the guerillas as "military adventurers."

Timoshenko

Timoshenko, now a much decorated commander, had to go back to school, as did his older comrade, the mustachioed horseman, Budenny, who stammered in a cold sweat when the teachers at the military school raised the simplest questions of strategy; to school, too, went many popular guerilla leaders, whose names were already a legend, as did innumerable workers and farmers who had been promoted on the field and who now were compelled to undertake the difficult task of theoretical study.

The Military Academy was founded on February 13th, 1919, during the darkest period of the civil war. The principal member of its staff was the Tsarist military expert, Mikhail Sapozhnikov. He was born in 1882 in Zlatoust, in the Urals, on the frontiers of Europe and Asia. In 1918, although his gifts had not been ignored by the Tsar, he unhesitatingly came over to the Revolution. The Red Academy granted him the post of professor of strategic sciences, then ap-

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pointed him Chief of the Academy, and awarded him the order of the Red Star, long before he became a Bolshevik party member (he was not admitted until 1930).

Sapozhnikov is past master of the science of war. Significantly the title of his chief work is: "The Brains of the Army" — today he is the brains of the army led by Timoshenko, who still feels a certain amount of timidity vis-a-vis the "specialist".

For Sapozhnikov is regarded by many as the most brilliant disciple of Bernhard von Clausewitz. Thanks to Sapozhnikov, the Russian military have assimilated Clausewitz's teachings at least as well as the Germans.

In one chapter of his book "On War," Clausewitz writes: "Because war is part of politics, it must assume the latter's character. When politics becomes powerful and grandiose, war, too, assumes these traits, and intensifies them to the point of absolute violence." Thus, Clausewitz gave a clear notion of "total war." The above

quotation expresses in a general way what Frunze said about the particular case of Russia: "The forms and methods of warfare of the Red Army are determined by the class character of the Soviet State, by its economy, its politics." Frunze's doctrine has been called the "cornerstone of Soviet strategy and tactics."

Frunze also taught that "political education (in the Red Army) will be an additional type of weapon, which will prove terrifying to our enemies." The educational "weapon" referred to here, is the province of a special department of the military service, the "political commissariat" assigned to each Army unit.

During the civil war, the political commissar represented the party at the front. Commissars were almost always chosen from those who had been members of illegal revolutionary groups. In beleaguered Tsaritsin, Joseph Stalin, personally appointed by Lenin, was the first political commissar met by Timoshenko. During the heated disputes between guerillas and regular



Marshal Trmoshenko meets his brother

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army officers, Stalin, acting as the revolutionary arbiter, took the side of the guerillas.

Later the authority of the military in the Soviet Union increased, and the status of the political commissar became "of one among equals."

After the initial Russian failures in the Finnish campaign of 1939, Timoshenko urged Stalin to abolish the office of political commissar or at least to limit its authority. As a result of Timoshenko's prompting, the political commissar was deprived of all power to make decisions. This reform, however, which aroused much comment, proved to be of short duration: in the war against Hitler, the political commissar again emerged important in the Russian army.

We see here an instance of the eternal conflict between political and military leadership, between party leaders and generals. The French revolution ended with Napoleon's triumph; in Italy, the fascist party won out over the army with Mussolini; in Germany, Hitler has pro-

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visionally gained the upper hand over the Reichswehr; this very same Reichswehr which was so jealous of its privileges under the Weimar Republic, has now unconditionally submitted to the command of the Fuehrer, whom it once employed as a police spy.

In 1922, Timoshenko graduated from the Higher Military Academy. In 1925, he was appointed joint Commander and Commissar of the Third Cavalry Corps; until 1930 he took advanced courses for commander commissars at the Military Political Academy.

Between the civil war and 1930, while Timoshenko rose from a peasant to a staff officer, the workers' and peasants' army also underwent transformations; from a band of guerrillas it became the disciplined and highly organized force it is today. The relationship between the revolutionary character of the army and its efficiency has been colorfully expressed by Timoshenko:

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Revolutionary élan, he says, has the value of firepower. Firepower is certainly indispensable, but what is decisive is the cool, calculating reason, which directs the guns against the enemy on the basis of precise mathematics.

During the years of Timoshenko's military education, all political and social life in Russia was completely militarized. (The National Socialists later imitated this development in an extreme, almost insane form). The Russians announced that the party press, Russian science and art, the schools, trade unions, Komsomols, and the Ossaviakhim (a voluntary association for the military training of men and women, conducting classes in gymnastics, group-marching, and protection against gas-attacks), were cooperating to create inexhaustible reserves for the Red Army; and that this complete militarization and "politicalization" would be completed by the industrial and agricultural triumph of Stalin's Five Year Plan. It is interesting to note that some writers trace the origin

of the Five Year Plan to Frunze's sharp criticism expressed in 1925:

"The technical equipment of the Red Army is inadequate, a situation which may have the direst consequences."

A revolution draws much of its strength from the belief that it has found the final solution to the problems of civil society. But a time comes when revolutionaries realize that they have a great deal to learn and to relearn, and they go to the school of science. During this period of readjustment, dogma and human passion are engaged in a bitter struggle, which almost always ends in terrorism. The two American revolutions, the War of Independence and the Civil War, are among the few that failed to produce a terrorist regime. The National Socialists adopted terrorism as the very principle of government. The Soviet Union did indeed resort to stern measures, but always considered them a temporary expedient.

Timoshenko passed through three schools:

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the civil war, the terrorist regime, the Military Academy. The results of his education appear in his "Disciplinary Code of the Red Army," issued on October 12th, 1940. By abolishing the "Temporary Disciplinary Code of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army," he brought to an end the development of a whole generation. He not only reintroduced the strict obligation to salute superiors, and carefully prescribed the manner of addressing them, but also gave officers the right to use arms against refractory subordinates.

If the same code had been applied in the old Tsarist army, the career of the young corporal would have been prematurely ended.

But it must be observed that Marshal Timoshenko had the time to learn new lessons from the collapse of the disorganized French army: he learned that the strongest fortifications are of no avail when the enemy has succeeded in occupying positions behind or within them. When war broke out, the Russian army was compelled to adopt Timoshenko's disciplinary concepts.

■

Chapter IV

D O A S I D O

■

■

"It is our main task of the year to raise the power, to make allpowerful the squad, the section, the company, the battalion and the regiment."

—Timoshenko.

CAN IT be said that Timoshenko has rejected the values he held during his career as a guerilla?

"Firepower is certainly indispensable, but what is decisive is cool, calculating reason," he has said. These words imply a grudging acceptance of the role of "cool, calculating reason."

Interviewed by Eugene Petroff (Kataev), the Russian satirist (killed during the siege of Sebastopol), Timoshenko said:

"We have fine troops, they are inured." He repeated the word 'inured' several times . . . Why did the Marshal stress this particular quality of his effectives? He knew, from bitter experience, the disheartening effect of the Russian

Timoshenko

winter on the morale of the troops; during the winter of 41-42 the Germans learned to their cost what it means on the Russian front not to be inured . . .

Timoshenko's present appearance indicates deep-rooted changes. The young guerilla was dashing and rakish, his expression was one of defiant idealism. The forty-five year old Marshal is grave and deliberate, his steady glance indicates a determination to proceed with the utmost severity, though without *cruelty*.

Most characteristic of the man, as you can see from his pictures, is his total lack of "pose." In one photograph, showing him giving instructions to his officers, he holds his arms outstretched, with palms open. You can see at a glance that this is no "posture," but the spontaneous expression of a naive and generous nature.

"Do as I do," is his watchword, and it has become a slogan. He is always with his men — everyone who has seen him at the front testifies to this. It is as though he wants to endow every-

one with his own ambition . . . "You must always rely on them. The chief thing is to be with your men," Lenin had said to him—and he had listened "in a state of great excitement." Lenin must have been for him the perfection of his own idealism, which, now matured, recognizes the inevitability of *certain obdurate facts*. *Timoshenko, today, accepts the need for iron discipline.*

Interviewed by Ralph Parker, Timoshenko said of the Nazis: "We'll spin them out like a bobbin thread." He goes slowly and takes the long-term view. All reports agree that he is "without political affiliations or ambitions . . ."

Was this always true of Timoshenko?

While Budenny, Voroshilov and other guerilla leaders have been celebrated for their deeds in the Bolshevik civil war, their names given to factories and cities, their exploits referred to in cinemas and discussed in school texts, Timoshenko, until the second World War, was com-

paratively obscure. His name is not to be found in the official history of the Russian civil war, nor even in the latest edition of the Soviet Military Encyclopaedia which lists every Soviet army officer from the rank of colonel.

It is also odd that his old comrades who climbed to the peak of the Soviet hierarchy and achieved world popularity, never mentioned the companion-in-arms of their days of glory. And yet he could not really have been forgotten, for during the Finnish campaign of 1939, after the first Russian defeats at the Kemi River, Suomusalmi and Ladoga, Stalin remembered this capable officer and summoned him to replace the "*too old*" *Voroshilov*.

The only ascertainable fact about Timoshenko's military career up to then is that his promotion dates from the "Russian Trials."

After 1933, Timoshenko went abroad. He was one of the Russian officers sent with Tukhachevski to observe the manoeuvres of the European armies.

Until the end of 1936, Timoshenko served as assistant commander of the Kiev Military District under General Jona Emmanuelovich Yakir, who was implicated in the military trials. The following year, Timoshenko was given a commanding post in the strategically important Caucasus Military District. He succeeded General N. D. Koshirin, who was arrested, and toward the end of the same year, he succeeded as commander of the Kharkov Military District, General Dubovoy, another victim of the purge.

In 1938 and 1939, Timoshenko returned to Kiev as chief of "Special Military Districts." When Poland was crushed by the Nazis, Timoshenko directed the advance into eastern Poland, and he accomplished this task in an exemplary manner, enforcing the strictest discipline and proceeding with severity against all military excesses. The excellent behavior of the Russian troops contrasts with the atrocities committed by the German Storm Troops and the Gestapo. No wonder so many thousands of victimized Poles

fled from the German-occupied territory to seek the protection of Russian rule. Timoshenko's order: "Not an apple must be picked on the road," was repeated everywhere.

Even so he remained relatively unknown.

His name is not mentioned in the records of the Russian "trials," although he rose to high rank at that time by a procedure which in the Soviet army was called "promotion by purge." Yet there can be no doubt that Timoshenko closely followed the second outbreak of terror, this time against his own caste; and it must be presumed that his interest was not limited to that of a spectator, for the autonomy of the high command, which he himself advocated, was under attack in the 'trials.'

Now, what was behind the "trials"?

No revolution can avoid the use of force. But the application of force in unaccustomed ways by a new elite hardly ever fails to create a pervasive feeling of mistrust among the leaders. It is only a step from mistrust to accusation.

Like the Jacobins in the French Revolution, the epigones of the Marxist doctrine in Russia were accused of the most infamous crimes against the new regime. And even before the tribunals had sentenced the old Bolsheviki, it was announced that plots of an entirely different kind had been discovered.

We have seen that the differences of opinion between the party and the army go back to the days of the civil war. Lenin had created the "Political Department of the Army," which appointed commissars chosen from the Bolshevik ranks to supervise the politics of all military units—30,000 commissars were appointed during the civil war.

But immediately afterwards, there were complaints that military circles influenced the selection of the commissars.

At the height of the struggle waged by the Stalin regime against Trotskyism, Yagoda, chief of the OGPU, a notorious intriguer, if not a saboteur under German influence, exploited

the existing tension for his own double game: he simultaneously transmitted evidence of a conspiracy of the generals to the Kremlin, and warned the generals of an impending attack by Stalin.

The intended reaction of the military caste did not fail to materialize.

It is quite conceivable that Tukhachevski, the Marshal accustomed to glory and honor, popular in Russia, brilliantly received in Paris and London, had joined a group to resist the alleged threat to his position. It is, of course, impossible to say, — the trials were held behind closed doors — whether and to what extent Russian generals entered into relations with foreign enemies of the Soviet Union.

There is no doubt that the presence of German instructors in Soviet Russia, as well as visits to European capitals, gave the Red Army officers the opportunity to contact fascist agents. Thus, shortly before Hitler's accession to power, von Hammerstein, of



Marshal Timoshenko talks to a group of officers.

the German General Staff, took so active a part in the Russian military manoeuvres in the Ukraine, that the German newspapers demanded an investigation of the incident. Is there any connection between this and the fact that General Gamarnik was indicted for having "offered the Ukraine to the Germans"? Gamarnik committed suicide before he was given an opportunity to defend himself, it is reported. And Yagoda, the OGPU chief, was publicly tried for treason and sentenced to death. Yet as a result of his denunciations, many Red generals had been shot. Whether or not Yagoda had followed German instructions in denouncing them is a matter we must leave to conjecture.

Timoshenko, however, emerged intact from the "purges," although he had belonged to Tukhachevski's suite and General Yakir's staff. More than that: he actually continued to support the organizational ideas of the unfortunate Marshal. For the bestowal of a Marshal's rank on Tukhachevski, Voroshilov, Yegorov, Bluecher

and Budenny, marks the introduction into the Soviet Army of an idea of hierarchy which had been strongly resisted by the partisans of a people's army. In 1938, at the Soviet Congress, Tukhachevski had thundered against the political commissars and the situation of "split" authority in the army.

Timoshenko maintained this position when during the Russo-Finish campaign, he eliminated the political commissars and re-established a full military hierarchy with ranks and insignia.

The campaign against Finland, after the easily accomplished occupation of Polish eastern territory, gave Timoshenko an opportunity to emerge from anonymity.

The Soviet attack on Finland created resentment in wider circles than did the political "trials." But whoever wants to criticize the invasion of Finland must take into account that it was motivated not by greed for conquest, but by the Russian fear of a German attack. In the

last analysis, the bloodshed in Finland is attributable to the European politicians who sponsored National Socialism or ignored its implications. But after the pact with Hitler, Soviet Russia was regarded as his nominal ally and for this reason many genuine anti-Nazis sympathized with Finland.

People did not know, or they overlooked the fact, that Finland is ruled by a Fascist anti-semitic caste of Swedish origin, and that the swastika cross figures in her green flag. Baron von Mannerheim, Finnish dictator, former Tsarist page, established his tyranny with the help of Prussian reactionaries. In 1920, Count Rüdiger von der Goltz, a Prussian general, supported Mannerheim's rebellion, led by the "Baltic Corps," a Black Reichswehr formation, against the Red Army, and occupied Helsingfors. Since then, Mannerheim has based his power on the bayonets of the "White Guard," from which the German Storm Trooper organizations learned much, and he has remained in

constant contact with the German Nazi leaders, above all with Hermann Goering, who by his first marriage is a great favorite in Swedish Fascist circles. Recognizing the likelihood of war with Germany, the Russians had good reason to expect General von Mannerheim to open his country to the German army, thus endangering the ice-free port of Murmansk as well as Leningrad.

Public opinion, however, took the side of the little country which, forced to fight, stubbornly repulsed an invader overwhelmingly superior in equipment and manpower. The Russian army suffered reverses, despite its "secret weapons," fragmentation bombs called "Molotov bread-baskets," armored sleighs, huge tanks and mass attacks. On the narrow forest roads, Finnish "guerillas" blew up unmanoeuvrable tanks with hand grenades. And the Mannerheim Line, constructed by English engineers, seemed for a time impregnable. Unlike the Maginot Line, a compact fortified zone, it was composed of a number of small forts, spread out in depth, the

strongest being in the rear.

After two months of disastrous fighting during which Voroshilov was revealed to be incompetent, the Russian army command called up new men: Sapozhnikov, former member of the Tsarist General Staff; General Kulik, artillery expert; and Timoshenko.

Timoshenko attacked the problem with a businesslike peasant stubbornness. He had always tried, when training his troops, to reproduce as closely as possible the actual conditions of battle. For the Finnish campaign he insisted on the utilization of the most modern techniques, and stratagems, and he tried to coordinate the functions of every army unit, and even of each individual soldier. He hit upon a fairly simple idea which proved of decisive value: he ordered the construction of a replica of the Mannerheim Line to be used for the training of assault troops. The first Russian drive against the Muola citadel, the pivot of the entire Finnish fortification system, proved the value of Timo-

Timoshenko

shenko's idea. In addition to frontal attacks supported by heavy artillery, the Russians launched small detachments across the ice which infiltrated into the enemy positions.

After the victory, the Soviet government retained only the parts of Finnish territory indispensable to the defense of Russia. Who now will designate this behavior as imperialist aggression? Today even Great Britain, who supported Finland in 1940, is at war with her, for the "brave little country" is obviously a tool of Germany.

These are the military and technical lessons learned by Timoshenko in the Finnish "war of manoeuvre": the Red Army needed at least a million more men; superior manpower alone, however, did not insure success—proved by the destruction of the numerically strong Russian force at Suomussalmi—enthusiasm cannot be instilled en masse, individual training being indispensable.

Is the Marxist *injunction* against making the individual an object of worship responsible for the fact that even now so little has been made known about Timoshenko by the Soviet press? *Only one episode was told in the Marshal's life story.*

In 1940, Semyon Constantinovich Timoshenko, shortly after he was made a Marshal, visited his native village, Furmanka, in reconquered Bessarabia, and went to see his peasant brother, after nineteen years of separation.

Timoshenko's countrymen had been living all this time in abject poverty under Roumanian rule. Cut off from its natural seaport, Odessa, Bessarabian agriculture was declining. The Rumanian government taxed the rebellious province beyond its capacity and kept it in a state of siege; thousands of farmers had been executed.

After the reoccupation of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union, the inhabitants of Furmanka-Furmanovka sent an invitation to their "favorite

Timoshenko

son." The letter was dictated by local pride and the hope for better times, and was spiced with phrases that suggest the fine hand of Soviet propaganda.

Here is the text of the invitation:

"People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal and Hero of the Soviet Union, Timoshenko:

"Dear Semyon Constantinovich!

"How quickly time flies, how remarkable the changes it brings! It seems but a short time ago that you, together with Comrade Khrashev, arrived in our village by plane, in order to personally convey to us, your townsmen, the long-awaited joyous tidings of the overthrow of the Rumanian yoke. June 29th, 1940, is a significant date in our life. After many years of separation we once again met our comrade. Our village remembered you as a barefoot boy sweat-

ing for the kulaks as a farm laborer. And then many years after you returned here as People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal and Hero of the Soviet Union.

"This is what Soviet power and the Communist Party have made of a simple peasant fellow! In these bright days we want to tell you about our initial successes, about the changes in the life of the little village of Furmanovka. We, our fathers and forefathers, for years dreamt about the land. But this, our land, was beyond the reach of many of us. It was farther removed from us than the stars. And even those who owned meager plots had very little joy. The land was seized by the kulaks, for unpaid debts and mortgages. One hundred and twenty-six peasant households in our village had little or no land at all. And what is a peasant to do without land? The search for work took some of us from the villages to all parts of Rumania. Vaukula Burkan even reached America, only to return, like many others after years of wander-

ing, a mere pauper. Our age-old dream has now come true. There are no longer any landless peasants in Furmanovka, as in the other villages of the liberated region. The households of our village alone have been granted 516 hectares of land. Thirty-eight poor peasant families have moved to the best land and the homes which were but recently owned by the kulak usurers. In addition they received government credits for rehabilitation.

"Today we all feel the concern for us of our own Soviet power. Credits have been provided for the purchase of cows, for there were 200 families in our village who had no cattle. If any villager took sick in the past we had to bring him for treatment to faraway Kiliya or Izmail. And treatment meant big expense. Today a splendid hospital and drugstore occupy what were homes of priests. Indeed, there is less sickness in our village today. And no wonder, for life is different, with no worries, plenty of food, and happiness.

"Children were a heavy burden to the family in the past. Paternal feelings were at times muffled by the cries of hungry children. Today our fatherland cares for the young generation like a true mother. Marie Bulga and Yevdokia Lesha — mothers of big families — have already received substantial allowances from the state.

"Many more families in our village and in the Kilya district are to receive this Stalinist gift for bringing up a healthy Soviet generation. Do you remember our school, Semyon Constantinovitch? It was hard for the sons and daughters of peasant to study there. Indeed, how could one study when there was nothing to eat? Even by means of fines, the Rumanians were unable to get our children to attend school. But today, 250 pupils attend school in the village. The state allocated nearly two million rubles for public educations in the Kilya district, in 1941. A former merchant's house is being converted into a village club. Both old and young will now have a place to spend their evenings.

Hot weather prevails now in the Izmail region. Grain and vegetables are maturing and we expect a bumper fruit crop. One's heart swells with happiness at the sight of the fields! Our own Soviet soil generously rewards our free and happy peasant labor.

"During similar hot days last year most households of Furmanovka village were confronted with this problem: how to procure bread until the new harvest, how to make both ends meet? And today, dear Semyon Constantinovich, please come to visit us. Every home will be glad to greet you as a guest. And together we will drink our fine Bessarabian wine, toasting our great fatherland, the Communist Party, the great and most beloved of men, Stalin!

"Please come, dear Semyon Constantinovich! We at present are preparing a gift for the Red Army, so that together with the whole Soviet youth it can defend the great mother country, and the Blue Danube, over which the Red Banner of the land of Socialism waves."

As the Marshal, powerful and dominating, in all the splendor of his military honors, stood on the sandy hill of the village, as he surveyed the people staring at him from a respectful distance, and noted the depressing poverty of the tiny huts dotting the immensity of the steppe, a sickly, sorrowful-looking man stepped forward and awkwardly extended his hand. *This was his brother*—Semyon Constantinovich might have looked the same if talent, relentless energy and luck had not collaborated to make him great. At first Demyan approached his brother with hesitation, then pulled the Marshal to him who thumped his brother's shoulders heartily. The notables of the village presented Timoshenko with an armband, which he wore next to the order of Lenin and the Order of the Golden Star.

His townsmen, many of whom remembered him as a barelegged boy, invited Timoshenko to a drinking party, and he kissed the little boys with running noses whose parents hoped that one day they would do as well as Semyon.

They were now to grow up as Soviet citizens, and enjoy the fruits of the proletarian and peasant rule, a hope which was one year later frustrated by the Nazi invasion. Cameramen photographed the return of the great son to his reconquered homeland for this propaganda.

Timoshenko returned to Moscow. In this age, not even a Marshal can afford the luxury of lingering in his native town. His method of reproducing for the training of troops the specific obstacles to be overcome in a given action, had proved its worth. *It is now a definite principle of Red Army training.* Timoshenko had also tried to *put the relations between officers and privates on a personal basis.* He is opposed to the levelling equalitarianism of the political commissars.

Naturally, Timoshenko has not been able to work out all his ideas, but he has proved himself a determined and inspiring commander, as witness his injunction to the Soviet soldiers: "Do as I do!"

▪

Chapter V

*A BOX IN THE BOLSHOI
THEATRE*

▪



Marshal Timoshenko and General Zhukov

■

To be vigilant is not only to discern
your enemies but to recognize your
friends.

Joseph Stalin to Pierre Laval, in 1935.

ON MAY 7TH, 1940, in the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, a baroque building devoted to classical art, Tchaikovsky's hundredth anniversary was honored by a performance of the classical opera "Iolanth." Tchaikovsky is to the Russians not only what Wagner is to the Germans and Verdi to the Italians, but more—Tchaikovsky is Stalin's favorite composer. The entire diplomatic corps attended this musical event. But the sensation of the evening was not the celebrated composer, but a living man. The public stood up to applaud as Stalin, followed by his suite, Molotov, Voroshilov and one unknown high ranking officer entered his box. Here was a surprise:

the place next to the leader of the Soviet Union was occupied not by Voroshilov, the popular People's Commissar for Defense, but by an unknown officer, a tall man with the relaxed bearing of a cavalryman, with a polished bald head, strong chin, slightly slanting steady eyes, and a naive, rather boyish smile. Only a few intimates of the Kremlin discreetly whispered the name of the new favorite: General Semyon Konstantinovich Timoshenko. A new name. Yet, that evening Timoshenko already wore around his neck the gold and platinum diamond-encrusted insignia of a Soviet Marshal.

On the following day, the Soviet press, which had previously announced the promotion of Sapozhnikov and Kulik to the rank of Marshal, featured on the front page photographs of Voroshilov, Kulik, Sapozhnikov and Timoshenko. In the account of the Tchaikovsky celebration, "Marshal Timoshenko" was referred to for the first time. It had been announced that Defense Commissar Voroshilov, who, for fifteen

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years, each May Day, paraded magnificently caparisoned across the Red Square, had been demoted, that he was to occupy a lower position in the hierarchy as Vice-Premier and Chairman of the Defense Committee. Now the public was informed that General Timoshenko had been responsible for the victorious conclusion of the Finnish war. Then followed the TASS announcement that Timoshenko had been made a Marshal of the Soviet Union, and appointed People's Commissar for Defense. Moreover, he received the highest existing Soviet decoration, the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union," as well as the Order of Lenin and the Golden Star. These favors showered on Timoshenko, beginning with his appearance in the box of the Bolshoi Theatre, where twenty years before, the young guerilla Semyon had for the first time heard a speech by Lenin, were not accidental.

Voroshilov was regarded as the exponent of defensive warfare, he had opposed radical reforms and novel conceptions. Timoshenko stood for just the opposite.

In Europe there were few able to gauge the full significance of the new administration of the Soviet Army. Europe then faced problems which did not appear resolvable by the changes in the Soviet General Staff. The British had just been driven out of Narvik and forced to abandon Norway, which became a German base. Few realized that France herself would soon go down. Then on May 10th, Germany launched her assault through Holland.

The leaders in the Kremlin, attentive to the mistakes of the French and British, seem to have understood what France's perilous position was, and they proceeded at once to remodel the Red Army. The reform movement was initiated by Gregory K. Zhukov, chief of staff since February, 1940. This former commander of the Kiev Military District, was impressed by the results

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achieved by Timoshenko and it was Zhukov who urged that the obscure forty-five year old cavalryman be promoted to the rank of Marshal. He considered Timoshenko capable of the brutal determination to carry out a reform program.

The first public utterances of the new Marshal are distinguished by a tone of open aggressiveness. An AP dispatch in the New York Times of August 26th, 1940, reports as follows:

"Defense Commander Timoshenko in a 'pep talk' to Soviet military comrades declared: 'It is your duty to work incessantly so that the Red Army can realize its tremendous power and bring victory with little bloodshed' . . . he exhorted the commanders to continue to strive to keep the army at top pitch explaining that in the consideration of recent wars our government and Stalin have demanded of us this year the reorganization of our work to utilize the activity of all from the lowest to the highest . . . "

August 31st: Big Russian forces begin war

games . . . Realistic Red Army drill in "*offensive tactics*" in a special Western military district were disclosed today, while Russia viewed with an attitude of cool detachment the latest shifts of frontiers in the Balkans. The Western manoeuvres were conducted under the supervision of Timoshenko.

October 6, Moscow: The Soviet Press tonight published a lengthy description of the part being played by Trade Unionists and the working class in the *Defense of Britain* and at the same time Marshal Semyon Timoshenko, Russian Commander of Defense warned of:

provocations that may threaten our borders.

"You are entering the ranks," said Marshal Timoshenko, "when the flames of the second imperialist war are developing in the West and in the East. The Soviet Union, thanks to the wise Stalinist peace policy, stands outside the orbit of war, but this does not mean that we are safe from any provocation that may threaten our borders. Under this condition we must be ready for any

emergency and further strengthen the Red Army's fighting capacity."

The New York Times commented:

"The Defense Commander's warning was made in a message to graduates of the Russian Military Academy while he was awarding them their commissions. He praised the Russian peace policy, but said that it didn't guarantee Soviet safety. He did not indicate from what direction provocation might come."

At that time it was clear that provocation to the Soviet could come from only one direction, and that Timoshenko's war games on Russia's western frontier could mean only the preparation of resistance to a German attack.

In the confusion of the years immediately preceding the war, a period marked by the conclusion of numerous non-aggression pacts, treaties of mutual assistance and economic agreements by France, Russia, England, Germany, and Poland, only one power consistently employed the threat of war for the purpose of

blackmail: National Socialist Germany. Germany alone manipulated the fears which led to precipitate shifts on the diplomatic fronts. Now she threatened to war against the western powers, and occupied the Rhine, now she threatened the East, and annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia, simultaneously checkmating the possible moves of France, Poland and England by brandishing the Bolshevik bogey and referring to Russia as "that common criminal dripping with blood."

It is true that nothing caused so much confusion in the ranks of the European working class as the German-Russian act of August 21st, 1939, only a year after Hitler had raped Czechoslovakia. But the fact that the Kremlin was not guileless in signing up with Ribbontrop and Hitler is demonstrated sufficiently by the statement of Timoshenko as quoted above. Moreover, in his quiet, but ruthless manner, Timoshenko immediately organized "offensive war games" on the Western frontier, summoned

three classes of conscripts (18, 19, 20) and warned against possible provocations. In connection with his promotion, the French newspaper "Paris Soir" wrote on May 10th, 1940:

"Like Voroshilov, his friend and predecessor, Timoshenko is a good orator. He is tall, heavy, with a powerful voice, and his appearance is forbidding and martial; but in contrast to Voroshilov he can control himself, and so far no one has ever heard him formulate an opinion contrary to the views of the all-powerful Soviet dictator."

More accurately, Timoshenko had never publicly expressed any opinions whatsoever, neither for or against Stalin—and he continued to speak and act solely as any army man. He possesses to a high extent the two virtues of the military leader: caution and ambition, virtues, which to France's misfortune, were completely lacking in Gamelin, the French generalissimo.

Kulik and Sapozhnikov were also made Marshals as a result of their achievements in the

Finnish campaign. It was Sapozhnikov who actually planned the campaign. At the outbreak of the Second World War, he was chief of staff of the Russian army. Sir Alfred Knox, former military attaché to the British Embassy in Petrograd (from 1911 to 1918) wrote in the Sunday Dispatch (February 15th, 1942): "I first met Sapozhnikov in September 1914. On the 21st of that month I noted in my diary: 'Captain of the General Staff, Sapozhnikov, a very capable officer with plenty of initiative.'"

It is certain that Sapozhnikov, a thorough student of German militarism and an old opponent of Prussia's eastern ambitions, had also made a thorough study of Germany's plan for a Blitzkrieg against Russia, drawn up as early as 1918, shortly after Germany's collapse, by his most capable and most rabid adversary of the First World War, General Hoffman. He knew that Hoffman was responsible for the Skoropadski adventure in the Ukraine, that since Wilhelm II, the Ukraine had been the chief objective of Ger-

man imperialism, and that after Hoffman's death, Generals von Seeckt and Fedor von Bock had further perfected the "Blitz plan."

In his book entitled "Hitler Over Russia," published in 1936, and scarcely noticed at the time, Earnst Henri wrote:

"The present Commander of the 3rd army, which comprises one third of all the new German divisions, destined for the march into Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, and the Ukraine, is Fedor von Bock, none other than the Crown Prince's senior General Staff Officer during the war."

Moreover, in *Mein Kampf*, and in several speeches, Hitler, had referred to the Ukraine as the "living space of the German people"—and it was generally understood that in this case Hitler's utterances could be taken seriously.

"If we had the Urals, if we possessed Siberia, if we had the Ukraine, Germany would swim in plenty," he shouted at the Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg in 1936. From the very beginning

the Führer owed his rise to the exponents of a Greater Germany, who coveted the Ukraine. Arnold Rechberg, a big industrialist and a friend of General Hoffmann, was one of the first to finance Hitler and to bring Rosenberg and Skoropadski together. Hoffmann's plan of conquest was the core of the National Socialist program; the rest, only a means to his end. Hitler changed the Hoffmann plans in only one respect: the order of execution. Hoffmann, Seeckt and probably von Bock had recommended as the first step an attack on the Soviet Union in alliance with France and England; only after the seizure of the Ukraine did they hope to crush France by breaking through Holland and Belgium. The Anschluss with Austria and the partition of Czechoslovakia were conceived, as the necessary prerequisites for a march into the Ukraine.

Immediately after Munich, Nazi Germany created an "autonomous" Carpatho-Ukrainian state of eastern Czechoslovakia, and began open

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agitation for the "liberation" of all Ukrainians from Polish, Russian, and Rumanian masters, suggesting that they seek the "Führer's" protection. Could the Kremlin, when Ribbentrop brought Hitler's non-aggression pact to Moscow, have seriously believed that the Pan-Germans had renounced the plan for the seizure of the Ukraine?

On June 29th, 1940, yielding to the threat of the Soviet Union, Rumania evacuated Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, which were admitted to the Moldavian Autonomous Socialist Republic, as part of the U.S.S.R. One of the first references to Timoshenko in the world press, a rather curious commend, can be found in *The New York Times* of September 25, 1939; we quote: "Revolutionary leaflets issued by Timoshenko in the Ukrainian language were signed: Commander of the Ukrainian front army, Semyon Timoshenko, Commander of first rank."

In his Reichstag speech justifying the attack on Russia, Hitler admitted that he regarded

Russian occupation of Bessarabia as a threat to Germany:

“While our soldiers from May 5, 1940, on, were destroying the Franco-British power in the West, Russian military mobilization on our Eastern frontier was being continued to a more and more menacing extent. From August 1940 on, I therefore considered it to be in the interest of the Reich not to permit our Eastern provinces to remain unprotected in the face of this tremendous concentration of Bolshevist divisions.

Thus there resulted BRITISH-SOVIET CO-OPERATION, intended mainly to tie up such powerful forces in the East that radical conclusions of the war in the West, particularly with regard to airpower, could no longer be vouched for by the German High Command.”

When we analyze this post-facto attempt at justification, it becomes clear that the German Luftwaffe's assault on England was interfered with to no small degree by the Russian occupation of Bessarabia.

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The importance attached by the Soviet government to the reconquest of Bessarabia, is made clear in a documentary film entitled "Soviet Frontiers on the Danube," which pictures the Marshal's visit to his homeland.

The task of the army is to prepare for war by regarding it as imminent; diplomacy prepares for war by assurances of peace.

In the German military periodical "Militärisches Wochenblatt," No. 29 (1939), Captain Schoeneich wrote an article entitled "We need eastern troops":

"The heartening peaceful conquest of space at the eastern and south-eastern frontiers of the old Reich . . . raise a number of military problems... For decades the German soldier has been looking westward. As a result, we have today a unified army which is prepared to fight only on a western theatre of war . . . The same undershirt and the same knitted gloves protect the German soldier on the Rhine and at Memel . . .

We shall here refer to all land units stationed east of the Oder as 'eastern troops'. We cannot afford to abandon space to an enemy in the east, and simultaneously, in accordance with former procedures, enforce a quick decision in the west with the troops thus released . . .

"It would be fatal to assume that frost and snow make impossible all military movements on both sides . . . As a rule, in the regions extending east of our borders, long periods of rain, seldom interrupted, prevail from the end of September to the beginning of December, and from the middle of March to the end of April, which transform the few existing roads into bottomless morasses . . . And granted that our present equipment would be adequate for a war of movement in the east from the end of April to the end of September—that is, a period of five months—we still would have to stop in the fall . . ."

With true German thoroughness, the article goes on to indicate everything required for



Marshal Timoshenko watching the operations of the enemy.

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a "march to the east": a type of snow camouflage, imitated from the Red Army; steel helmets with felt lining, sleds, gas stoves, head guards, mittens, etc.—All of those things which the German army, engaged in its first winter campaign in Russia, lacked . . .

In the fall of 1940, Marshal Timoshenko went speedily about the job of reorganization, clearly demonstrating his conviction that there was not much time to lose. He began by insisting on adherence to a discipline as rigid as that of the German army; the obligation to salute was most carefully regulated; penalties for infractions were made more painful; officers were given permission to use firearms against insubordinate troops. All these measures were summed up in his "Disciplinary Code of the Red Army," of October 12th, 1940.

His most revolutionary tactical innovation was to stress the training of small units: operations of motorized troops, tanks and airplanes

made the use of large infantry masses inexpedient. The plans for infiltration into enemy defense positions also stressed the extreme importance of small units. In an address to his officers reviewing the results of the war games, Timoshenko said:

“We intend to check up on the fitness of our small units . . . If each such particle attains real efficiency and brings genuine military skill to our large units, our troops, should they be called upon to fight, will carry on their operations without sustaining heavy losses.”

Thus he returned to the bold conceptions of the guerillas, while integrating the actions of the small groups and strengthening the general discipline.

In his own words, his idea was:

“To develop the initiative and energy of the junior ranks without losing the authority of the higher.” According to Timoshenko, numerical superiority is valueless without personal initiative. His slogan is: “Don’t ask what the numer-

ical strength of the enemy is, but ask where it is, then find and destroy it."

He demands unconditional obedience to orders, but he has no use for robot masses. His views are in accord with his temperament, his experiences, and probably with his attitude towards the fascists. He regrets the fact:

"That there was too much stress on techniques and not enough field training . . ." In conducting war games, he always follows the principle of reproducing the actual conditions of combat with the utmost exactitude. He hardens his troops by constant night alarms and forced marches of as much as thirty miles in the coldest temperatures.

Finally, it was Timoshenko's task to rejuvenate the army and to put new young officers in the important posts. On November 4th, he issued an order "creating the ranks of corporal, junior sergeant, senior sergeant and senior. His purpose was to fill those gaps between privates and commissioned officers. Examinations were held for candidates for the new ranks.

These measures once again emphasize the differences between the party and the army . . . became increasingly marked after the first period of the Revolution. Once again, the question arises: *What is the decisive factor*: The political commissar's opinion of the soldier's political reliability, or his military superior's opinion of his military reliability? Not only in the fields of art and science, but also in military matters, the contradictions between individual ability and total organization make themselves felt.

The commander of a small unit cannot consult the party line at a decisive moment, or follow conflicting positions: the bureaucracy's and the general staff's. Timoshenko said that there is room for improvement in the Red Army, but no room for divided authority.

He had learned from his experience that the military man must eschew politics, and also keep politics out of the army. He is a soldier through and through. He began as a guerilla, now he is

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leader of millions of guerillas, but guerillas who have had the benefits of collective training.

In an address to his soldiers in June 1941, he said: "In war—and every soldier knows it—you must first of all obey, but also think for yourself, because battles often are won by men who think for themselves and fight it out in the ditch . . ."

"Obey, but think for yourself!"

That is the slogan of the man whose appearance with Stalin in the box of the Bolshoi Theatre began a new epoch in the military history of Europe.

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Chapter VI

THE BAROMETER

▪

■

"Brothers our country is in your hands."

—*Timoshenko.*

IT WAS a quiet Sunday morning in Berlin. Scarcely anyone was about except the police and SS sentries before the government buildings. The Berliners had once more taken to staying in bed on Sundays, despite the nervousness and fear induced by the nightly visits of the Gestapo, despite the ever present possibility of an air raid alarm, following that second winter of the war, during which Berlin has been repeatedly and severely bombed by British flyers. The German people had much to think about, for instance, the stubborn refusal of the British to make peace, Deputy-Führer Hess' adventure in Scotland, the sudden abandonment of the plan to

defend Europe against Bolshevism—the people had even been expressly forbidden to revile the accomplishments of “Kultur-Bolshevism,” which were now termed “degenerate art.” Many party members were quietly bathing in the Wannsee. Had not Goebbels explained that the rumors of troop transfers to the Russian frontier were pure “bunk”?

6:30 A.M., June 22nd, 1941. Along the “Unter den Linden,” the boulevard whose trees had been trimmed to German exactness by order of the Führer, two diplomatic cars pass by the curtained windows of the Soviet Embassy, and turn into Wilhelmstrasse: in one are Japanese, in the other, Italians. This early Sunday morning hour, when few Berliners turn on the radio, was chosen by Propaganda Minister Paul Joseph Goebbels as the appropriate moment in which to read the portentous proclamation of the “absent” Führer. The few who may have heard this speech must have been bewildered by it. For it commenced with a furious arraignment of England, which

"in many wars destroyed Spain, Holland, France, and then encircled, deceived and betrayed Germany." And then — but had they rightly heard?—: "Internally and externally there resulted that plot familiar to us all, that plot of Jews and democrats, Bolsheviks and reactionaries . . . " Bolsheviks? Well . . . ? "However, for over ten years the Jewish Bolshevik leaders . . . At no time did Germany attempt to carry her National Socialist philosophy into Russia, but on the contrary Jewish Bolshevik leaders . . . " This went on and on, it lasted for a whole hour. At last the point of the harangue became clear: "People of Germany! At this moment an action begins which in magnitude dwarfs any operation yet seen in this world . . . For I today decided once more to entrust the fate and future of the Reich and our people to the German soldier. May God help us, especially in this fight!"

At 7 A.M. the representatives of the foreign press were hurried to Herr von Ribbentrop's

"Foreign Office." The Foreign Minister was more explicit. In the very room where, a few months before, he had shaken Molotov's hand, he said: "In actual fact the Comintern resumed its activities in every sphere *soon after conclusion of the German-Russian treaties . . .* fomented sedition and sabotage, organized subversive activities in the Protectorate Bohemia-Moravia, in occupied France, Norway, Holland, Belgium . . ." One fact became clear: the Bolsheviks had never been true friends of Nazi Germany.

But did Russia fall into the trap of Adolf Hitler's "assurances of friendship," as naively as other nations? Moscow, in fact, seemed unsuspecting, peaceful; thousands of its inhabitants were on summer vacations. Tass, the Russian news agency, simply broadcast Foreign Minister Molotov's explanation: "This unprecedented attack upon our country is a perfidy unparalleled in the history of the civilized nations . . ."

Premier Joseph Stalin remained silent . . .

Was Russia really caught by surprise? Let us look at the facts:

In December of 1940, at the Congress of the Communist Party, General Zhukov had declared that the Red Army was to be made ready for action on the Western frontier, in order not to be surprised by "foreign trickery."

On February 23rd, 1941, the twenty-third anniversary of the Red Army, Marshal Timoshenko in his address stressed the fact that "the tense international situation is fraught with many surprising possibilities, and it behooves every soldier to remember Stalin's warning: Maintain the entire nation in a state of readiness so that no enemy trick can catch us unawares . . ." This was scarcely six weeks after a renewed exchange of friendly assurances between Russia and Germany . . .

On April 6th, Soviet Russia ostentatiously concluded a pact with Yugoslavia, just before the Germans invaded that country.

Timoshenko

During the May 1st celebrations in 1941, Timoshenko repeated his warning to Germany: "The present international situation is pregnant with all kinds of surprises . . . " and even threatened "to repel and annihilate *any* encroachment by the imperialists . . . "

During all this time, "preparedness" had been the slogan of every Russian soldier, defense worker, peasant located along the European frontier, of each civilian in Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov . . .

The Kremlin and the people were feverishly preparing themselves. And yet the German army once again chose the time for the attack, once again struck first . . .

The German army marched into Russia. Like an "animated machine," the motorized columns moved with the "ease of a ballet dancer"; field telephones established communications "as efficient as between one city apartment and another." Apart from God whose support the

Führer had claimed most urgently, he summoned at the head of his army the pick of German strategists. First the "general quartiermeister von Wietersheim, the "man in the shadow"; Ludendorff's military heir. Its commander-in-chief was von Brauchtitsch, former "chief of the department of army training," the department responsible for the illegal rearmament of Germany after and despite Versailles. The chief of the general staff was Wilhelm von Keitel, the "desk general" who had accompanied Hitler everywhere: to the Brenner Pass, to see Mussolini; to Compiegne, to conclude the armistice with France; to Hendaye on the Spanish border, to meet General Franco.

Ritter von Leeb, who distinguished himself during the Boxer rebellion in China, in the first World War and during the bloody conquest of Munich by the Black Reichswehr, led the army which marched against Leningrad.

The army moving on Moscow was led by Fedor von Bock, nicknamed the "great killer."

Timoshenko

Organizer of the Black Reichswehr and directly responsible for many political assassinations, von Bock was chief of the Berlin Defense District under the Ebert-Republic which he hated.

The army marching against the Ukraine, the main German objective, was led by Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt, a Brandenburg noble; it was he who kept Berlin in check under von Papen; in 1934 he betrayed General von Schleicher to the party killers, and as a result became a Nazi favorite.

These three generals had planned and directed the "liquidation" of France.

One week after the invasion began, German Headquarters announced that Russia was finished. "The weather is magnificent," reported the "press soldiers" of Goebbels. "The operations at the front are developing splendidly."

The fact is that in one month the Nazi armies overran the Baltic states, occupied by Russia a year before, Bielo-Russia, and almost all of the Ukraine. The opponents of Fascism were filled



Russian troops dislodging German invaders. An infantry attack under the cover of tanks.

with uneasiness about their new ally: how much armament had the Soviets at their disposal? Would the inner enemies of the regime exploit its first military defeats in order to revolt? And above all, how good was the Russian General Staff, decimated as it had been by the "purges"?

That the situation was serious could be inferred from Stalin's decision to put Voroshilov himself at the head of the Northern army, protecting Leningrad; to give Timoshenko command of the Central army protecting Moscow; and to make Budenny responsible for the Southern army in the Ukraine. These former comrades of the siege of Tsaritsin were the highest ranking officers in the Soviet. Voroshilov had become somewhat stout, he preferred brilliant parades to the confusion of actual battle. And Budenny? Formerly a dashing cavalry leader, now an expert breeder of horses—was he a competent strategist? Timoshenko? All that was known of him was that with Generals Kulik and Sapozhnikov, he was chiefly responsible for

Timoshenko

the Russian success against the Mannerheim Line, and that he had radically reformed the army. It was said that from the very beginning he had belonged to the party group which advocated war against Germany. But could anyone dream of comparing him with commanders like General von Bock or Colonel General Albert Strauss, who had stormed the Polish fortress of Modlin and broken the Weygand Line at the French front?

A narrow black blockhouse behind the lines; a wooden table with general staff maps; a large box of cigarettes; a barometer on the wooden wall: this is Timoshenko's headquarters. Peering at the maps before him, he looks like a scholar absorbed in study. From time to time he looks at his barometer.

It is reported that the Germans possess a brilliantly organized weather service. It is claimed that before invading Poland, they precisely estimated how long the period of dry

weather would last. However, this may be, meteorology is at present in a rudimentary stage. One day science will construct infallible instruments and perhaps even find means to changeweather, clouds or a clear sky at random. Technology has solved unbelievable things. Yet the whims of weather are to this day to some extent an unpredictable factor, unpredictable as are the chances of war, the human soul, individual and collective.

The Germans have not neglected to keep files on national characteristics, with exhaustive lists of the traits of the peoples and races they intend to subjugate. They have tried to put war on a scientific basis: they strive to understand the psychology of the enemy, and they control the psychology of their own forces by a combination of discipline and propaganda that is truly masterly.

In an interview with Eugene Petroff, Timoshenko said:

"The discipline of the German Army was

splendid. But that was only at the beginning. The German Army is afraid to take older men into its ranks . . . The army is being replenished mainly with youngsters, boys in their teens. The Germans are afraid to enter forests. They become very frightened immediately behind their own lines . . . ”

Timoshenko adapted the severity of German discipline to the Russian army; an improved technique is valid no matter what its origin. But he had observed that even the iron German drill did not prepare the soldiers for the unexpected. The German soldier was frightened in the Russian forests, not only because armed guerillas roamed about in them, but also because of their mystery and strangeness. And he was terrified when he got back to his quarters after the tension of the front and began to consider the probable outcome of the struggle. He even began to wonder whether his somnambulic Führer was really infallible.

“Our equipment is superior,” said Timo-

shenko. "Our machine guns, tanks, planes, cannons are better; and we fire with greater precision . . . "

But there is a factor which he did not mention: the value of the idea for the sake of which machine guns, tanks and aircraft are thrown into battle. Men have for centuries died by millions for the sake of criminal and pathological ideologies, believing, for the very reason that so much blood was being shed, that the cause was just. National Socialism has given the world a terrible lesson.

Nevertheless the German soldier is afraid when in the forest and when in his barracks behind the lines. Why this fear? He suspects that his cause is not just, that failure is inevitable, and that the enemy will retaliate in kind. Out of fear of unemployment he voted for the Führer; out of fear of the Gestapo he obeyed the Führer; fearful of possible retribution he goes to battle against the "inferior races and nations."

So far the Führer had been always right.

France collapsed as the SA men had been told it would. Still, fate is never wholly calculable.

It was not the weather, the icy cold of Russia, that defeated Napoleon. The winter of 1812-13 was by no means unusually cold. Napoleon failed because he had aimed too high; he was beaten by people who, in despair, were ready to destroy their own land. And yet Napoleon, defeated, withdrawing, left behind the seed of future victory: the principles of the French Revolution, the ideas of the Rights of Men, which originated much farther away, in the New World. This better idea took root in the land of serfdom, blossomed in the Russian literature and ripened first in the Russian Revolution of 1905 and finally in the downfall of Czarism.

Bent over his military maps, Timoshenko calculated the firepower of his motorized troops, his infantry and his cavalry, and from time to time consulted the barometer.

The end of September came. The Germans and the Finns were threatening Leningrad, and had silenced the guns of Kronstadt. In the south, Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, had fallen after one month's siege. Rundstedt's troops were assaulting the rich coal mining regions of the Donets Basin. The Crimea had been cut off.

In the centre, General von Bock had wrested Smolensk and Vyazma from the Russians, although at great cost. And when he marched victoriously into Smolensk, he found that almost every house and vehicle in the city had been destroyed. When the German officers tried to turn on the lights in what buildings remained, hidden mines exploded.

"The Soviet Union is in a state of total chaos," Propaganda Minister Goebbels declaimed. "The cracking of the Stalin Line has decided the war against Bolshevism in Europe's favor . . ." Germany and "Europe" were becoming interchangeable in the propaganda of the Nazis.

Soon after these victories, the German war

communiqués became less boastful. "Nature," said one radio commentator, "behaves badly."

As a result of heavy rainfalls, the big guns sank in the soft ground. Like the weather, the population behaved badly. When the Germans entered a half ruined village they set up posters with the inscription: "A hearty welcome." But despite such touching expressions of friendliness, snipers would fire at them, and "treacherous gangsters acting behind the lines would attack our troops with axes, knives, pieces of broken glass and clubs!" as German radio commentators complained.

General von Bock who had riddled with bullets every house in Warsaw, ruthlessly drove his battalions forward. But in the birch and pine forests there lurked armed guerillas and the unknown.

"These Bolsheviks," declared a German spokesman, "having done away with religion and the soul, do not fear physical death and the hereafter."

Do the German soldiers fear these things? Do they wonder what will happen to them after they have died on the battlefield, despite the Führer's promise of a Reich that will endure for a thousand years?

The Germans know that the Russians fight with desperation. They know that Russian peasants on their own initiative assault the German troops with axes, sharp clubs, and pieces of glass.

From the Kremlin, Stalin was able to call a mysterious army to his assistance: "Guerilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed to foment guerilla warfare everywhere, blow up bridges, roads, damage telephones, telegraph lines, set woods, houses and transports on fire."

In *Pravda*, we read: "The guerillas of 1941 are the equals of those of the civil war. Thousands upon thousands of new Chapayevs have grown out of the soil of the Socialist Fatherland."

Guerillas! Guerilla warfare is the new slogan of the entire Soviet press, a sort of admission that

"cool, calculating reason" is not everything. In spite of the military academicians, the men "who direct the guns against the enemy" are living beings, subject to all sorts of drives. The desire for something higher, something that makes life worth living drives them to fight tanks and artillery with axes and pieces of glass.

While unusually heavy downpours flooded the Ukraine, on the Central front the weather, in keeping with the season, was mild and clear. Here Timoshenko's calculations proved correct. He already had made the best possible use of the rains, slowing up the German advance before the mild weeks of late summer set in. Both he and Sapozhnikov, who in August was appointed Vice-Commissar for Defense, know Clausewitz's maxim:

"For an offensive army, attack is most of the time more favorable than standing still; an attacking army brought to a halt is like an overladen cart on a downward slope."

Timoshenko stemmed the German "steam-roller" and took the edge off the five prongs directed by Bock against Moscow.

In these engagements both belligerents recognized the value of infantry. In open warfare, tanks and bombers are often only auxiliary troops when compared with the fighting infantrymen, who are not overburdened with equipment.

And in the rear, von Bock's "death battalions" were harried by "gangsters," not soldiers but peasants without uniforms, who, when caught, were strung up on the nearest tree.

The first blizzards swept the broken fields strewn with yellow wheat and flax, the villages of thatched huts, the windmills and forests. The German command spoke of the greatest and most terrible battle in history, and began to collect warm clothing from all the occupied regions in Europe for the coming winter campaign.

In his blacked out blockhouse, Marshal Timoshenko, bent over his map and from time to time looked at the barometer.

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Chapter VII

TIMOSHENKO FIGHTS THE NAZI TIME SCHEDULE

Because of its absolute nature, war admits only of one kind of success: final success. In this respect war is an indivisible totality. The conquest of Moscow and half of Russia in 1812 would have been valuable to Napoleon only if he thereby had achieved the peace he desired, but the early successes were only a part of his campaign; another part of it, the destruction of the Russian army, was still missing.

—*Clausewitz.*

THE newspapers said, "Timoshenko out — Zhukov in command. This was in October. Hitler prophesied that by November 7th he would review his troops in the Red Square; Stalin declared a state of siege in the capital; the foreign diplomats and American correspondents had packed their trunks; for no natural obstacle on the flat lowlands, no great rivers stood between Moscow and the iron masses of Bock's motorized divisions. "Our troops are in sight of Moscow," declared the German Ministry of Propaganda. "When we have reached the Urals, the objective of our invasion will have been attained."

The Russian General Staff had long ago envisaged the possibility of reverses, foreseen the need to retreat behind the Volga, and even to the valleys of the Urals and the steppes of Kazakhstan. And Ivan Maisky, Soviet ambassador to London, said:

“Should Moscow fall, we will fight on, supplied by these factories and growing industries hidden in the Urals. For years, we have planned dispersal of industries vital for war.”

But the fall of a capital means the loss of a powerful symbol. The fall of Paris meant to many Frenchmen the fall of France.

But their grasp of the value of symbols did not make the Russians overlook economic considerations, and Stalin sent his best field general, Timoshenko, who had so far been the only commander able to break the fury of the German blitz, into the region which was strategically the most important, to the southern front. Old guerilla memories connected the Marshal with the orientally picturesque port of Rostov on the river Don. It

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was in this city that with a few hundred men he had captured the drunken White Guard garrison staff. But such exploits belonged to a romantic past. Now he was called upon to defeat not a few besotted Tsarist generals at the head of an undisciplined mob, but General Gerd von Rundstedt, a representative of the Prussian military caste, pupil of the Potsdam military school, member of the German general staff in the First World War; who now, on the basis of precise calculations, directed the formidable onslaught of armies drilled for years, against the gate to the rich coal mining regions of the Donbass and the oil fields of Baku. He had defeated Budenny twice. Budenny, in two instances, had ordered his left wing to retreat only after the Germans broke through and could easily attack his armies from the rear.

Budenny and Voroshilov, who had proved equally unsuccessful in the Novgorod sector of the Leningrad front, were deprived of their commands and assigned to "the task of organiz-

Timoshenko

ing new armies." Zhukov, who like Timoshenko was a disciple of Sapozhnikov, was put in charge of the defense of Moscow. Zhukov's previous post of chief of staff went to Sapozhnikov himself.

When we consider his military and political conceptions, it becomes clear that Sapozhnikov was destined for this office. He had been a member of the commission which negotiated the military pact with England and France in 1939, the pact sabotaged chiefly by the anti-Bolshevik cliques around Laval. The appointment of Sapozhnikov, old enemy of Germany, as chief of staff, like the appointment of Litvinov, who had always opposed pro-German policies, as ambassador to Washington, demonstrated the growing reproachment between Soviet Russia and the western democracies.

No, Timoshenko was not out, he was sent to the southern front to ward off the gravest threat to Russia. It was more important to frustrate the robber's designs on indispensable raw ma-

terials than to defeat the objectives determined by his vanity. Even if the "Führer of Europe" were finally able to view the Lenin mausoleum from the Kremlin, even as in Paris he had viewed the tomb of Napoleon from the *Dôme des Invalides*, he would still be far from the regions most indispensable to his plan for world conquest: the oilfields of Baku.

In August, at a stormy session of the Supreme War Council, Timoshenko had made an impassioned plea for the thesis that in the total plan of defense the strategic pivot was not Moscow, the capital, but Baku, the key to the Caucasus, the second largest oilfield in the world, producing two hundred million tons per year. With Baku, Nazi Germany would be supplied with oil for years. Moreover, the Caucasus contains other raw materials indispensable for Russia: magnesium (necessary for steel production), silver, lead, zinc, coal, iron, cotton. After the Ukraine, it was the chief objective of Hitler's alleged "crusade against Bolshevism."

Towards the end of the First World War, the English established themselves in Baku, and after the collapse of Tsarism, held a line on the northern slopes of the Caucasus, leading from the Caspian to the Black Sea. British engineers laid out the trans-Iranian railway, from the Persian Gulf to Baku and to Tiflis. The English know every inch of this terrain. In November, Timoshenko and General Wavell, the British Middle East Commander, met to discuss common measures for the defense of the Caucasus. Once again the former British line was to serve as a defensive position to protect the highest European mountain chain. Wavell promised that British air units and engineers would sabotage the oil wells in the event of a German breakthrough.

Timoshenko's assignment to the southern army meant the acceptance of his carefully thought out defense plan. His counter-offensive on the central front, the first offensive ever launched against a Nazi army, was a daring move, in-

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tended, no matter what the cost in lives, to gain sufficient time for Zhukov to assume command before a new German thrust began. And the cost was terribly high. Timoshenko's troops, now under Zhukov, fought to the point of utter exhaustion, until at last the slowly retreating army was relieved by fresh reinforcements from Siberia, and the winter cold set in. After this first successful test of the offensive strength of the Red Army, Timoshenko began his second offensive.

To defend Rostov after the fall of Kharkov and Taganrog, Timoshenko chose the same method by which he had parried Bock's onslaught on Moscow in August and September. He let Rundstedt's advance detachments move forward, over-extending their lines, then he hammered the thinned out flanks of the smaller units and forced the others to precipitate flight.

In Poland and in Flanders, the knifelike thrusts of the German advance motorcycle detachments had been devastating in their effect.

Their sudden appearance had spread such terror in towns and villages, that the population, seized by panic, crowded all the roads and paralyzed the movements of their own troops. Timoshenko did not have to fear this sort of demoralization; on the contrary, the peasants of the Ukraine were valuable auxiliaries.

When General von Kleist with two Panzer Divisions, one motorized division and the Viking Elite Infantry Guard, supported by General Schwoedler's Panzer Division, Hitler's Elite Infantry Guard, and two Infantry divisions of Italians and Hungarians, began a frontal attack across the Don steppes toward Rostov, Timoshenko had had time to elaborate and strengthen his defense lines. The attacking Germans suffered tremendous losses trying to break through the Russian stonewall.

Kleist tried to organize a new attack on Rostov from the north, by crossing the rivers Donets and Severny at several points, and by going around the Russian main army. For this thrust

he used the full force of his mobile Panzer divisions. Timoshenko countered this move by throwing large masses of infantry and cavalry supported by tanks to the north west of Rostov, and flung himself at Kleist's too rashly advanced left wing.

As soon as the Germans began to waver and retreat, Timoshenko ordered the Don Cossacks under General Krichenko to pursue. The appearance of these bearded horsemen on a battlefield hitherto dominated by modern machines had a remarkable effect on the Nazi soldiers. They had not been prepared for this eventuality. And it is a proved fact that when Germans are taken by surprise, their resistance crumbles. Timoshenko's armies entered reconquered Rostov. General von Kleist and his staff fled from Taganrog.

German headquarters announced that the evacuation of the central portion of Rostov permitted by the army "to make the most thorough preparations for necessary measures against

the population, which, contrary to international law, participated in fighting at the rear of the German troops." This lying communiqué, however, concealed a tragic truth: in accordance with the "international law" of Nazism, thousands of peasants, men, women and children fighting for freedom were massacred or deported as forced laborers to Germany.

Time works for the break—if they know how to use it. On the central front Timoshenko had to wrest each day from the enemy by counter attacks regardless of losses, in order to gain time until winter began. When Timoshenko yielded his command to General Zhukov, the Germans were already out of breath. The citizens of the Soviet capital worked with fanaticism, often sixteen hours a day, built fifty miles of earthworks, set barbed wire entanglements and dug anti-tank traps. On the frosty 7th of November, Stalin reviewed the troops in the Red Square. It seemed then that Moscow would fall. The

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second all-out offensive with the steel battering ram of "21 unconquerable German Panzer-Divisions" was approaching. Its objective was to cut Moscow's connections with the outside world. A forward thrust east of Leningrad was to cut the capital from Archangel; and the occupation of Rostov was to separate it from the Iranian supply lines.

The reconquest of Rostov by Timoshenko was the turning point of the first winter campaign. First of all it broke the enemy's grip on Moscow; and what is perhaps even more important it gave Russia an opportunity to bring to completion the most magnificent organizational achievement of the war: the transportation of entire industrial centres, factories, machines, and pipe installations to the hinterland, to Siberia.

"Marshal Semyon Timoshenko's counter-offensive in the south," declared Major General Piotr Kotov, Soviet tank and petroleum expert, "has tightly slammed the door to the Caucasus and the valuable Russian oilfields there. The

Germans will again try to take it, but their time schedule is now completely ruined."

Like General de Gaulle, Timoshenko had always advocated an offensive strategy. In the last few years, we have observed the catastrophic fall of the world's most formidable fortifications, the Czech defense line, the Mannerheim and Maginot lines. Timoshenko himself had organized the penetration of the Mannerheim Line. Did he expect the so-called Stalin line to prove more resistant?

It is true that the fall of the Maginot and the Czechoslovakian defense lines were more a product of political than of military inaptitude. Czechoslovakia was sold out. Traitors concealed from the French people the actual strength of the enemy. Even though inferior, the armaments of the democratic states might have been effective if hurled against Germany at the right time.

Again and again the western democracies attempted to satisfy the "last" demands of a regime, by nature insatiable. The National

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Socialists had reorganized the entire state machinery, industry, culture, politics, armaments, legislation, education of the youth, and even private life for the sole purpose of conquest and destruction. To trust their "last demands," as definite, was equivalent to expecting a falling incendiary bomb to stop in mid-air. To engage in negotiations with the Germans was like debating about the intentions of enemy fliers during an air raid, instead of manning the anti-aircraft guns.

But no anti-aircraft defense, in fact, no defense of any sort, can succeed if resolution is lacking. Timoshenko, like de Gaulle before him, inherited a ruinous situation, produced by the blunders of the major European states. De Gaulle's warnings were lost in the files of a conceited bureaucracy. Timoshenko's military reorganization was commenced at the eleventh hour, after Europe had been conquered; it came too late to frustrate the German onslaught at the frontier. The occupation of important strategic

advance bases in Finland, Poland, and Bessarabia; the increase of the number of Russian mobile artillery units; the rapid construction of armored sleighs in Siberian factories; the training of parachute troops—a Russian invention which the Germans had perfected—all this was, directly or indirectly, the work of Timoshenko, following his assumption of the command.

His insistence on the strictest discipline, the stress he laid on initiative and responsibility and the training of smallest units, were aimed at bringing each soldier to think offensively, and there is little doubt that his instructions appealed to revolutionary impulses which had been progressively weakened by his predecessors.

There was a fundamental difference between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich. The Soviet aimed at inner consolidation, and it wanted above all to work out its economic program within its own borders. Until its program had been achieved—everyone agreed this would take many generations—the Soviets had every

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reason to avoid war. But the expressed aims of National Socialist Germany were the conquest of states and the subjugation of races.

The Russians perhaps overrated the time-gain derived from the pact with Hitler. Stalin and Ribbentrop shook hands in Moscow, but each one was fully aware of the other's murderous enmity. Both miscalculated the first round. If the Russians were not able to complete their industrial and military reorganization, in the time between the pact and the invasion of their territory, the Germans, for their part, had to invade without having first beaten England. By the time that was achieved, the Soviet might have been invincible.

All this while Timoshenko had to retrain a defensive army for the offensive. Technically this was all but impossible, especially in the signal and communication services, which are so extraordinarily important on a front 2000 miles long. Yet the will to resist had reached such a point in both the civilian population and

the army, that the German victories in the first months of the war gained nothing but ruins: burned towns and villages, rusting machinery, corpses sticking in the snow, wrecked agricultural implements, a soil soaked with vitriol and kerosene.

"It was terrible," so Goering summed up the winter campaign. "The Führer has deeply suffered for his troops."

Timoshenko was correct in his belief that the southern front was most vital for the preservation of Russia, for to be able to continue his work of destruction, Hitler must have the oilfields of Baku.

■

Chapter VIII

*FROM TSARITSIN TO
STALINGRAD*

■

The German-occupied zone seems like a sea dotted with islands of Partisan (guerilla) districts.

—*Ilya Ehrenbourg*

ROSTOV was the only important city reconquered by the Russians. For each city the Nazis entered they paid an enormous price in men and time. How long a city can resist even the most destructive technique of modernized attack was shown by the dramatic defense of Madrid in the Spanish civil war. It was not, however, the German and Italian armed columns that conquered the city, but the "fifth column," as General Miaja named the traitors and compromise-seekers within the ranks of the besieged. Later, this term was used indiscriminately to designate all kinds of enemy activity; the Nazis even applied it to the Rus-

sian guerillas, who wage an uncompromising struggle against the invaders of their homeland.

These irregular Russian formations, acting like real troops, have often succeeded in penetrating German "Hedgehog" fortifications, bunkers disposed circularly between village huts and barns reinforced with concrete. The Russian communiqués speak in such cases of the "recapture of uninhabited localities."

The tactical use of small units, employed by Timoshenko when he himself was a guerilla, perfected by him when he became Commissar of Defense, proved an invaluable "secret weapon" during the first phase of the campaign.

The outstanding moments of this struggle for life and death raging along a 2000 mile front, in which the armored masses of two world powers have been pounding each other for more than thirteen months, are at this writing the reconquest of Rostov, and the Russian advance on Kharkov, both actions directed by Timoshenko.

But let us look again at the positions of the

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combatants after the failure of the Nazi blitzkrieg in the first winter of the war. Hitler's armies had destroyed a considerable portion of European Russia and conquered most of the Ukraine. However, the Soviet was not defeated, and the Russians, for their part, had little enough to boast of.

Hitler took over the supreme command, and so did Stalin. Sometime after Christmas, von Brauchitsch, the German generalissimo, was seen loitering in mufti in the Ringstrasse in Vienna. He had warned against a winter campaign in Russia, just as General von Fritsch, his predecessor, had advised against the invasion of Poland. Fritsch's criticism of the Führer cost him his life.

Lieutenant-Colonel Soldan, the Nazi military expert, assessed the situation. We quote his views as stated in the German Transocean broadcast of December 1941: "The toughness, the staying power of the Soviet soldiers is almost beyond belief. Are the Soviet troops driven by fear of

the enemy or by fear of their political commissars? It is hard to say. The fact remains that they are offering most stubborn resistance. How discipline is maintained among the Soviet soldiers does not matter. The only thing that matters is that discipline *is* maintained, and must be reckoned with. Even after great battles in which hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers have been killed or taken prisoner, the Soviet political commissars succeed in restoring the discipline of their troops."

If we are to give credence to such statements by exceptionally well-informed German officers, then we must note that the political commissar is once again influential in the Red Army. But we should take into account the German High Command's misjudgment of Soviet military discipline, and the fact that its theoretical organs expressed contempt for Timoshenko's reforms.

The tendency to augment the party's control of the army seems to manifest itself on both sides. The Nazis have increased their SS-

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Troops, whose function is to enforce the party line in the army, to 500,000 men, many of whom are to be placed in the army units, and even in the High Command.

The situation following the winter campaign forced Timoshenko to attempt the reconquest of Kharkov. Control of the railways connecting this city with Moscow are of the utmost importance.

But here the Germans had had ample time to organize their system of "hedghog" bunkers, and there was no second front to divert large forces of the Luftwaffe. Timoshenko had to content himself with involving Fedor von Bock's army in stubborn and bloody fighting. Around Kharkov alone, Germany used one million troops as against the 800,000 employed at Verdun, the greatest battle of the First World War.

Because of these comparable masses of troops, and also because of the analogous strategic implications of the action, war correspondents have

called Kharkov the Red Verdun. Timoshenko aimed at delaying the German spring offensive, exhausted his adversary and forced him to use up his reserves. Kharkov resembles and surpasses Verdun certainly in one respect: it is the largest cemetery in the world.

In the battle of Kharkov, Timoshenko experimented with a new weapon: the thermite shell. These heat bombs were fired at German tanks from planes. In May 1942, the first attack by Russian fliers put the German tanks to flight. The experiment was successful. Burnt out tanks littered the field, Timoshenko's guerillas were as always close by, ready to finish off those who still lived and resisted . . .

Will Russia hold out this summer? Will there be a second winter campaign? The whole world anxiously asks this question, in belated recognition of all the sins of omissions, all the months and years of missed opportunities. The question is like a fervent prayer for more time. "The world situation at the present time," said Gen-

eral MacArthur, "indicates that the hopes of civilization rest upon the worthy banners of the courageous Russian army."

Civilization implies universality, and the millions of men of various political and philosophical beliefs who fight a common battle must sooner or later learn to adhere to a common code of humanity.

Anxious over the outcome of this struggle, which may determine whether the generations to come will be free or enslaved, men feel more than ever before the importance of gifted leaders. Such a leader is Timoshenko. His very name seems to exorcise the mortal peril threatening us. The general desire to follow and trust without looking backwards has been described by Major George Fielding Eliot (The New York Herald-Tribune, July 4th, 1942) as follows:

"Altogether too little attention is being paid to the subject of individual leadership in this war. We are thinking in terms of numbers of

tanks, or airplanes, of tons of shipping, rather than in terms of men who are going to use these things and of those who are going to lead these men in battle."

"In this respect, there is a very sharp divergence from the public attitude during, for example, the Civil War. Then it was a question of who was to be in command, of the man who was to do things rather than of the means he had to accomplish them with... The history of the Civil War is written in terms of Grant and Lee, Sherman and Johnston, Sheridan, Jackson, Forrest and Stuart rather than in terms of the production of the Northern arsenals or of Confederate imports of munitions. This is not to say that weapons were not of tremendous importance in that war as in every other war; but today the complexity of modern armament and the increased dependence of man upon the machine has tended to overshadow in the public mind the true place of leadership.

"Thus we have seen almost every sort of ex-

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From Tsaritsin To Stalingrad

planation in the press for recent British disasters in Libya, which were probably at least 76 per cent due to superior leadership by Field Marshal Rommel . . . ”

“The Russians understand this very well. Ask yourself why it is that in every crucial period of campaign in Russia, the name of Marshal Semyon Timoshenko appears as the man in charge in the decisive area. It is because he is the best field commander the Russians have, perhaps the best commander of large forces that this war has yet produced, and his very name and presence are as inspiring to the Russian soldier as the white plume of Henry of Navarre to the charging cavaliers of Ivry.”

Many of Major George Fielding Eliot's theoretical deliverances, such as “we are thinking in terms of numbers of tanks,” or “the increased dependence of man upon machine,” or “the problem is leadership” have been expressed by Marshal Timoshenko in terms of practical rules, as when he exhorted his officers not to ask “what

the numerical strength of the enemy is . . . ” or criticized “too much stress on techniques,” or demanded (after the war games of 1940) that the authority of the commanders be restored.

This progress and reform continue during war. Whoever expects war to bring only negative results is doomed to disappointment. From the trenches of the First World War, a collective society was born, and the value of the individual is becoming better understood in this war, even by the Germans who preach the nothingness of everything but the Reich.

The real post-war problem is to determine the order under which the next generations will live. Will this order be a totalitarian tyranny, or a society based on freedom and recognition of the human personality? What will be the structure of Germany when the struggle is over? After the war, Germany's immature democracy prepared the way for Nazism, and now under Hitler, Germans enjoy the perfection of totalitarian tyranny.

A Box In The Bolshoi Theatre

In Germany today in place of an emperor by the Grace of God, a Führer governs by his own godless grace. The aims of imperialism are still the same.

The Soviet Union since the days of civil war, has also experienced changes in its ideology.

Thus history brought Timoshenko back to Tsaritsin—to fight for more than the Legend of Stalingrad: for civilization.

THE END!

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